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A

# MANUAL

FOR THE

## *PARISH PRIEST,*

BEING A FEW HINTS ON

## THE PASTORAL CARE,

TO THE

## YOUNGER CLERGY

OF THE

## Church of England;

FROM AN

## ELDER BROTHER.

~~~~~  
Στηρίξον τους αδελφους σου.

Luke xxii. 34.  
~~~~~

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1815.



BV  
4016  
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TO

THE MOST REVEREND

THE ARCHBISHOPS,

AND

THE RIGHT REVEREND

THE BISHOPS

OF

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

—  
MY LORDS,

THIS little Tract, the production of the leisure hours afforded to the author in the last twelve months, I beg to lay at the feet of your Lordships, not only as the best means of rendering my work

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as

G. W. & S.

as useful as its merits will admit, but as a duty I owe to the Apostolical Order, set over that branch of the Christian Church, to which I belong.

The subject, my Lords, is highly important to the National Church, perhaps I might add, to the whole Christian world ; for a due discharge of the pastoral office on so considerable a portion of the pure Church, as that by God's good providence preserved within the British dominion, must be of great importance to the general cause of Christianity.

My opinion of the work,  
allow

allow me to say, is rather favourable ; indeed if it had been otherwise I should not have presumed to solicit the countenance of your Lordships, nor could I have entertained a hope of its being received by my brethren. But, my Lords, when I say my opinion is favourable, I do not feel any literary pride ; the work is not of that description which requires genius, or any uncommon extent of learning ; it is merely a few hints from an elderly ecclesiastic for the use of the younger clergy.

I do think however, my  
A 3                      Lords,

Lords, that these hints form a manual of pastoral advice, which, to the younger part of the ministry, may be of great use. Many a young man is no sooner ordained to the ministerial office; than he is placed in a situation far distant from those who are able and willing to give him good counsel; where he is surrounded with all the alluring temptations of the world, at an age when he still requires a friendly monitor.

To a young man under these circumstances, my book may be of infinite service; it may supply

supply the place of a Mentor ; it may excite him to pay attention to the duties of his sacred calling ; “ to flee youthful lusts,” and “ to shew himself a workman approved unto God that needeth not be ashamed ;” it may preserve him from negligence and folly in this world, and their dreadful consequences in the world to come.

Such as my book is, I lay it before your Lordships and my brethren ; should you, my Lords, see fit to approve, and they to read it, should the work attain such a circulation as to give a ground of hope that

that I may in any reasonable degree be instrumental in animating the younger clergy of the Church of England to an active and faithful discharge of their ministerial functions, great will be my reward. But, my Lords, if only one copy of my little Tract shall leave the bookseller's shop, and that one copy shall in any measure be the happy means of rendering one unwary brother, instead of a snare to weak Christians, a useful servant of his Divine Master, I shall deem my labour, and the expence of the whole edition amply repaid.

And

And now, my Lords, I will detain you no longer than to beg, that whatever may be your opinions, whatever may be the success of my work, you will offer up your prayers to the throne of Heaven for acceptance of my endeavours, however unworthy, in the service of God :—and to assure your Lordships, that awake to the arduousness of the situation in which you are placed, feeling that it may require all the great talents your Lordships possess, and all the divine influence we may expect will be shed upon the highest order in Christ's Church, under circumstances,

stances, with which from the present aspect of ecclesiastical affairs, you may have yet to contend ; deeply impressed, my Lords, with these considerations, that the Almighty may shower down upon your Lordships such abundance of his grace as will support you in every danger, and carry you through every trial, is the daily prayer of,

My Lords,

Your Graces,

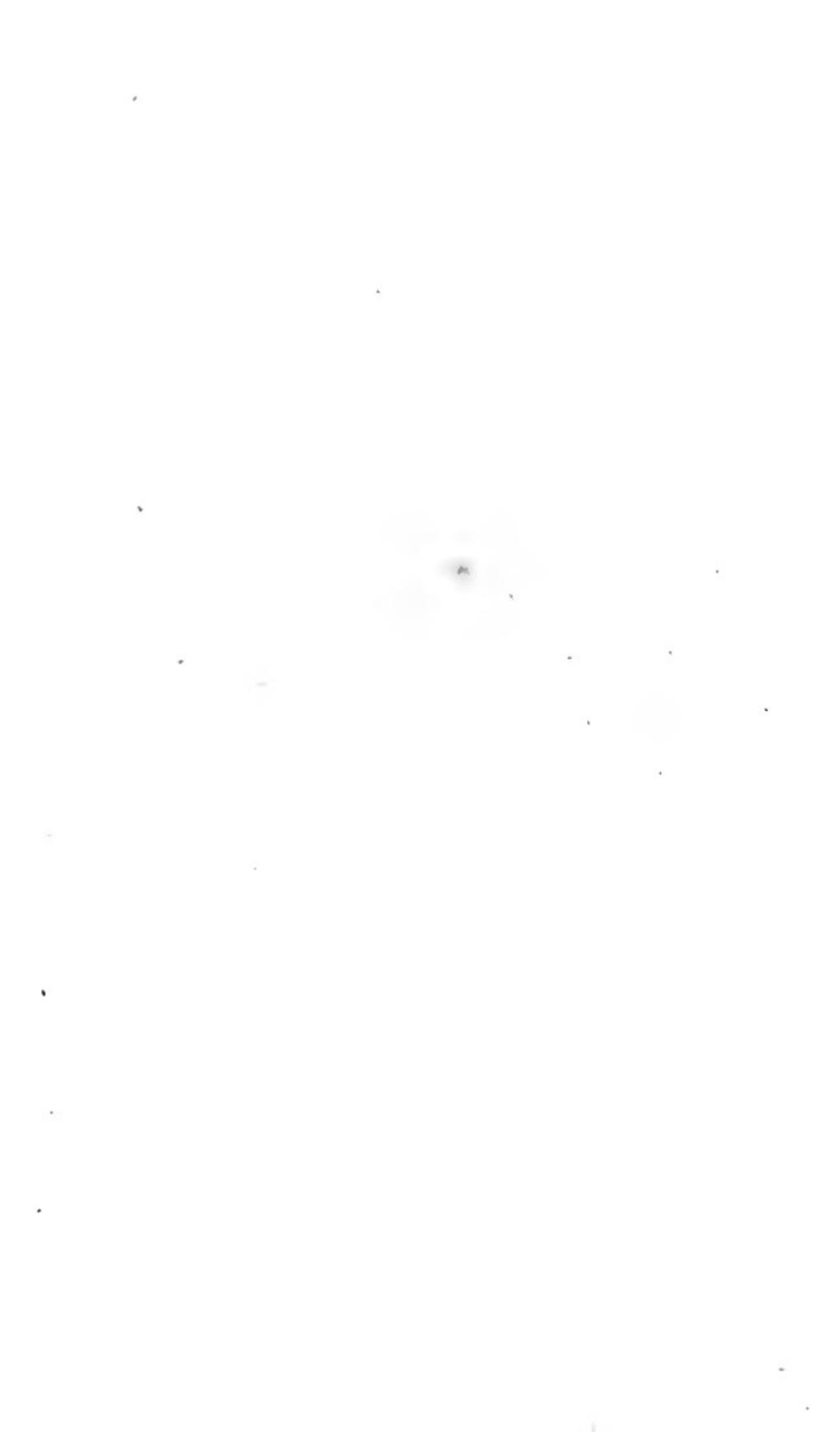
And your Lordships  
Most dutiful and respectful  
Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

*4th Sept. 1815.*

## ERRATA.

- Page 5, line 13, *for* and Secker *read* and a Secker  
10,      15, *for our* *read his*  
10,      17, *for our* *read his*  
10,      18, *for our lives* *read his life*  
39,      1, *for is equally* *read are equally*  
51,      9, *for affation* *read afflictus*  
136,     18, *for flock* *read nocks*  
140,     7, *for which* *read not in Italics*



## INTRODUCTION.

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Not only in a religious, but in a political point of view the well-being of a state depends greatly upon the due discharge of the sacerdotal office. If the priest be inattentive to his duty, the religion of the people will grow cool or corrupt, their moral conduct will become depraved, and the civil, as well as the ecclesiastical polity, will be in danger. "The priest," says Hooker, "is a pillar of that

Commonwealth, wherein he faithfully serveth God."

Political writers therefore we find frequently urging the necessity of providing for an ecclesiastical establishment in every well ordered government, and of enacting laws to insure the proper performance of ecclesiastical duty.

In this kingdom provision is made, both for inforcing, and rewarding, the exertions of the clergy; and at different times those set apart for the sacred office have been roused to a consideration of the responsible situation in which they are placed, by writers of their own body; some of the superior rank in the hierarchy have published their directions

tions and admonitions to the lower orders, and several of inferior degree have urged their brethren, upon considerations of the highest importance, to discharge their trust with fidelity.

Never was the attention of the clergy to every part of their duty, publick and private, more requisite than at the present time. Education is become so general amongst every class of the people in this nation, and the taste for pulpit composition in the middle ranks, so much more refined than it formerly was, that there are few congregations in which a very unskilful mode of reading the services of the Church, or a want of tolerable correctness in the lan-

guage and arrangement of a sermon, would pass unobserved : And the spirit of proselytism rages to such a degree amongst some bodies of dissenters, and those, the wildest and most dangerous, that the constant unremitting private labour of the pastor, is not more than sufficient to prevent even the well-inclined part of his flock being seduced from the doctrine and discipline of the Church.

These considerations induced me to employ a few leisure hours, in throwing together the following hints upon the discharge of the pastoral office. I was convinced the employment would be of advantage to myself, that it would give

give me clearer and more correct ideas of my duty, and I likewise had some hope, the memoranda I should collect for my own use, might be of service, at least to the younger part of my brethren.

I was not ignorant, nor was I unmindful, that many excellent works had been written upon the subject; I had not forgotten my own obligation to those of a Burnet, a Patrick, a Hort, and Secker; and to several more modern charges and treatises upon the sacred office. But considering, that it was long since any collective body of pastoral advice had appeared in print, and that some change in the ecclesiastical

circumstances of the kingdom had taken place, I conceived I might be able to give a few hints on parochial matters, which were not to be found in former works of the same description ; at all events, I trusted a new publication would awaken attention to a subject of the highest importance to our Church and nation.

I intend to comprise my hints in two chapters, one on the publick, the other on the private labours of the parochial clergy. Proposing to touch but lightly on the manners and habits of the parish priest, I shall not appropriate a chapter to these heads, but shall give a little general advice upon the subject in this place.

The

The clergy are a distinct body of men, set apart for the service of the Church; it is therefore highly proper that they should be distinguished by some outward mark. The external garb of the priest, not only induces the respect of the people towards him; but it assists in awakening his own attention to the sacred commission he bears. The Almighty himself appointed particular habits for the priests of the Jewish, and a similar custom has been adopted by the Christian Church. Let then every one who has taken upon him the priestly office, conform in this as well as in every other matter, to the rules and ordinances of the Church. Let him

put on grave and decent apparel. The stile must be regulated by the situation in which he is placed ; but whatever mode of dress may be suitable to his cure, it should be of such a description, as will not offend the eyes of those who ought to have the greatest respect for their minister.

That the clergy are men, and that some relaxation from labour is necessary to them, as well as to the rest of mankind, no one will deny ; and whatever interest, or pleasure, a parish priest may take in the functions of his office, still there must be times and seasons for withdrawing himself from his common occupation. The bow will not bear to be always bent : sacred study may

may be his greatest amusement, and parochial visits may afford him sufficient bodily exercise, but some employment foreign to his general business, will be requisite to induce a different train of ideas, and, by relaxing his mind for a time, make it vigorous and active on the return to its usual occupations.

Amusement then is certainly allowable to the clergy; of course strictly innocent in the most extended sense of the term: and it should not only be innocent, but characteristic.—Of what particular amusements the relaxations of a clergyman should consist, I will not here inquire; all I wish to say upon the subject, is, that they

should be of a description, which will neither lessen him in the eyes of his flock, nor occupy that time and thought which ought to be appropriated to more serious and momentous concerns.

And these amusements, innocent, and clerical, and allowable as they may be in their nature, it will be understood, from what I have said, are to be *recreations* only : they must be taken with moderation, and not pursued with a degree of ardor, which will endanger our becoming attached to them ; or even make them appear in the eyes of our parishioners, to be the *business* of our lives.

I have, so long as my attention has been turned to the subject, considered

considered an intermixture of the clergy amongst every rank of society, of the greatest advantage to the religion and morals of the nation. The bishops associate with the peers, the subordinate clergy are in the habit of familiar intercourse with the middle ranks, and the parochial ministers, through the constant communication it is in their power to keep up with their parishioners, may always have an influence over the manners, and morals of the lower order.

An intermixture of the clergy with the laity I am persuaded is of the greatest consequence to the well ordering of society. Their presence, like that of females, gives a cast of propriety to social meet-

ings ; and though, they may *sometimes* be constrained to witness an over-stepping the bounds of strict temperance, or decorum, yet they will in *general* perceive that respect paid to their order, which declares, what would be the consequence, if they were secluded by custom or inclination from the familiar intercourse, that now takes place between themselves and the laity.

Far from necessary therefore is it for the parish priest to decline that social communication with his neighbours, which may be of reciprocal advantage. Society will relax and unbend his mind after study and the labours of his office.—He may, at the tables of his

his lay neighbours, gain information in many branches of useful knowledge, and an insight into men and manners. And he may be an instrument, perhaps an unconscious instrument, of keeping mirth within the bounds of decency and decorum. But to do this he must be cautious in the selection of his companions ; if he shews a partiality to, and keeps up an intimacy with men of known profligate habits ; if he is continually joining their parties, and instead of restraining, approves their intemperance and ribaldry, he is so far from being of service, that he is of the greatest detriment to the cause of morality and religion ; he makes the Christian ministry

ministry give a sanction to those deeds, which the Christian religion declares will exclude all who practise them from any benefit in the atonement of Christ; he disgusts the sober part of his parish, renders his ministerial labours ineffectual, and perhaps drives some of his flock from the bosom of the Church.

It is not the part of the Christian minister, with pharisaical pride to refuse all communication with every one he may think not possessed of that genuine piety he could wish; to say, as it were, “Stand by, for I am holier than thou;” but he should carefully avoid a familiar intercourse with men, whose habits and manners render

render them, in the eye of the world, unfit companions for those who have dedicated themselves to the service of the Christian Church.

This will not bring the society of the parochial minister within too narrow a compass. Not a neighbourhood, I believe, is to be found which will not afford a sufficient number of proper associates for the clergy, and where the tables of the higher ranks of the laity are not open to every rank of ecclesiastics, whose conduct deserves the notice of the wise and good. Let me then urge my younger brethren, for the sake of the Christian Church, for the sake of the flocks particularly committed

mitted to their charge, for the sake of their own eternal welfare, to be cautious into what society they enter when they are just setting out in life. They may, and they will, if they conduct themselves properly, gain admittance into that society which is suited to their character, which will make them respected by their parishioners, and useful in their profession. If they form habits of intimacy with the intemperate and dissolute, they will exclude themselves from the friendship of the thinking and religious part of the neighbourhood ; and instead of rendering their hours of relaxation subservient to the cause of religion and virtue, they will by the

the sanction of their presence, lead their companions farther into sin and misery, and have a dreadful account to settle when their stewardship is inspected by that Master, whose service they have neglected, whose commands they have disobeyed, upon whose religion they have brought a scandal, and the work of whose enemy they have been performing and advancing.

The parochial minister should not only be attentive to his external deportment, to his dress, his amusements, and his society, but he should be careful to form habits which are useful and becoming the clerical character.

I would recommend in the first place

place regularity in his proceedings, to have, as far as circumstances will admit, fixed times and seasons for all his occupations, whether of business or relaxation. There can be no proper husbandry of that most precious of the talents intrusted to man, time, without rule and order. I have somewhere met with the following aphorism of the thrifty in worldly affairs, "Take care of the pence, the pounds will take care of themselves;" intimating that large expenditures will not be unnoticed, whilst smaller sums, without care and attention, will pass away unobserved. May we not parody this maxim very usefully on the present subject, and say, Take care of

of the minutes, the days will take care of themselves. Indolent indeed must be that man who can suffer even one day to pass without an allotted employment; but many there are I believe whose time is generally and perhaps usefully engaged, that allow small portions of the day to glide away unoccupied, which might be profitably and pleasantly employed. Have times and seasons, not only for study, but for the different descriptions of study; there are some hours when the mind is more alert and better fitted for close application, and others more adapted to lighter reading; and always have a book at hand to fill up the straggling minutes. Much information

information may be gained in the course of the year from books; which a parochial minister cannot afford to make a part of his *studies*, and at times which would otherwise be lost to every good purpose.

There is a habit I strongly recommend my younger brethren to attain early in life; that is the habit of solitude; to be able, comfortably to pass a series of days without society. It will be understood, from what I have before said, that I by no means advise a seclusion from the world; far otherwise; all I recommend to a young divine, is that he should so interest himself in his home employments, that he shall feel no vanity

euity when, at times, they form his only engagements. The contrary habit tends to dissipate all serious thought. If when the mind grows a little weary, relief is iminedately to be sought in company, and not in a change of home occupations, the inclination to those occupations will gradually diminish, and the labour as well as the study of the parochial minister, will dwindle down to the lowest possible proportion. This habit likewise leads to the most fatal consequences. The situation of most young men renders it highly improbable they can constantly find proper society; if therefore society is deemed indispensable, whither can such men go, but where the dereliction of their

their duty must hurry themselves, and their sanction and example hurry their companions, into certain destruction. Let me advise the young ecclesiastic, to encourage if he has, and endeavour to attain if he has not, a propensity to reading ; by habit he will acquire a fondness for his books, and this habit will preserve him from the danger I have just pointed out, and it will be a source of profit and pleasure to him during his whole life.

The last hint I shall give to my younger brethren upon the subject of habit, but by no means the least important, is, to adopt the practice of self-examination. It was

was the advice of Pythagoras to his pupils :

Μηδ' ὑπνου μαλακοῖσιν επ' ομμάσι προσ-  
δεξασθαι

Πρὶν τῶν ἡμεριγμῶν εργῶν τρὶς ἵχαστον  
επελθεῖν.

Never to suffer their eyes to sleep nor their eyelids to slumber, before they had thrice reflected upon the actions of the past day.

Self-examination is a wholesome and useful exercise to every one. But to those who have dedicated themselves to the service of the Church, it is a highly important, if not a necessary duty, frequently to take a review of their conduct; “to call their ways to remembrance.”

*Con-*

*Consideration* is the grand desideratum in the conduct of human life, and it ever has been.—“O that they were wise,” says the Almighty of the children of Israel, through his servant Moses, “O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.” Few are ignorant of what they ought to do; but many are inattentive. Day after day closes upon great numbers, without one gleam of thought breaking in upon their minds, whether its occupation has been useful, or unprofitable, or hurtful; whether their time has been employed to the glory of God, and the good of their fellow-creatures, or has been wasted in

in idle or sinful dissipation ; or what account they shall be able to give of its transactions at the great and general audit.

Whoever rigidly adheres to the practice of self-examination, will not, I think, deviate far from the way wherein he should walk. Conscience by this means kept always awake, and at her post, whenever indolence or the indulgence of personal gratification is tempting him to waste, or misapply, a day which should be devoted to useful employment, conscience will whisper an admonition in his ear ; but should this prove ineffectual, when the internal monitor is placed in the seat of authority, and is called, at the close of the day to give judg-

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ment upon its transactions, then her voice *will* be heard ; and the sensations attendant upon her disapprobation, will be too uneasy to induce a repetition of that conduct, which occasioned them.

I do therefore earnestly recommend the custom of the heathen moralist, to the Christian pastor. Let him, ere he composes himself to rest at night, or before he goes forth from his chamber in the morning, recall the actions of the past day ; try them by the rule of his duty, and pass an impartial judgment upon them.—“ Passion will cease,” says Seneca, “ or become cool, when it knows it is every day to be called to account.”

OF THE  
PUBLIC DUTIES  
OF THE  
PAROCHIAL CLERGY.

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THESE consist in reading the service of the Church—preaching—and catechising the children.

In reading the service of the Church, too much attention cannot be paid by the parochial minister. The people are in general disposed to make light of the prayers ; and to consider the ad-

vantage they are to receive from public worship, is to be derived chiefly from the sermon. This idea is much strengthened when the liturgy is read in a careless or unskilful manner ; and no idea can be more erroneous.

It is most proper, indeed it is necessary, that the Christian pastor, set to watch for the souls of a parish, should explain the word of God to his flock, and enforce upon them the precepts of Scripture. But far, very far is the discourse of the preacher from superseding, or ranking higher than, the service of the Church. The order of Prayer prescribed by the Church of England, is itself a body of divinity. In it, all the doctrines, all the leading

ing principles, and all the precepts of our religion are summed up. The attentive hearer may in that learn his duty, and perform every part of public devotion.

Highly mistaken then are those, who rest their chief dependence, and pay the greatest or the only attention to the sermon. And this mistaken notion takes away from those who adopt it, a safeguard provided by our Church, and exposes them to great danger, especially in these days, when the Christian world is so split and divided. The hearer, who attends properly to the liturgy, will be guarded by a store of sound doctrine, of primitive Christian principles ; and should the sermon not

be in unison with the prayers, he will be able to correct the sallies of the preacher, and preserve himself from doubt or error ; whilst he who pays little or no attention to the service of the Church, will be tossed about by every wind of doctrine.

Let me then advise my younger brethren, to be particularly careful in the performance of this branch of their duty. Various endowments are requisite to form a good and a pleasing speaker ; such as strength in the voice, correctness in the ear, and melodiousness in the tone ; and these endowments are not bestowed upon all men : all men therefore cannot read, and speak, equally well. But where these gifts of nature are denied, much

much may be done by care and attention. Let the reader understand what he is speaking, and be attentive to what he is doing, and however harsh may be his tone, and inharmonious his voice, the service will not fail to have a good effect upon his congregation. The most material defects I have observed in reading the prayers of the Church, have been a failure in the reader, of comprehending the service, and of attending to the solemn duty he was performing. Wherever I could perceive that the minister understood what he was reading, and had his mind impressed with the subject, there the excellent Liturgy of our Church appeared to have a good effect;

but with every assistance nature could afford, when the speaker, from his stops and emphases, discovered that he comprehended little of what came from his lips, and was unfeeling to every part of the service, there I have noticed all to be cold and lifeless : when the minister was unmoved, the congregation appeared to be without devotion.

“ I do assure you,” says Archbishop Hort, “ there is no little skill required to read the public prayers as they ought to be read.” Whatever skill may be required in reading the service of the Church, I am persuaded is within the ability of most men. I must repeat, that if the reader is thoroughly acquainted

quainted with the sense and drift of what he is reading, and his mind is impressed with the solemn duty he is performing, though he may speak ungracefully, he will not speak ineffectually.

If, when the minister is leading the congregation in the General Confession, his thoughts are turned to the weakness of human nature, the imperfection of man's best endeavours, and that through the merits and intercession of the Redeemer, upon confession of past sins, and resolution of amendment, we can alone hope for pardon and forgiveness ; if he has these impressions upon his own mind, and a right apprehension of the excellent language in which these

sentiments are conveyed, he cannot fail of bringing the mind of an attentive hearer, to that humble and penitent frame suited to this part of our public devotion.

If the priest feels the high and solemn office with which he is invested, the goodness of God in granting pardon to repentant sinners, and the gracious promise of divine assistance to enable us to perform our part of the Christian Covenant, he will, I think, speak the Absolution with a dignity becoming his sacred embassy, tempered however with a humility befitting the frail condition of an *earthly messenger* even of the Almighty Himself.

The different portions of Scripture

ture in the Psalms, the Lessons, and the Epistles and Gospels, will be read with propriety, and will keep up the attention of the congregation, if the reader will take the pains to make himself well acquainted with the design and language of the sacred writers. If he fully comprehends, and feels himself, the prophetic effusions and pious resolutions of the royal Psalmist, the discourses of our blessed Lord, the interesting narratives of the Evangelists, and the forcible argumentative reasoning of St. Paul and the other inspired penmen of the Epistles, if he will so study these writings as to understand, and be attentive when he reads them, it is not the want of

strength or melody in the voice that will prevent their effect upon the hearers.

Let the same attention be given to the Collects and Prayers, and the effect will be the same.

The Litany I am persuaded must make an impression upon a congregation, when the minister himself is impressed with the excellent and forcible language of the petitions. When his own mind feels the necessity of begging our Lord and Saviour, "not to remember our offences, nor to take vengeance of our sins," "but to spare those whom he has redeemed with His most precious blood," his lips will not utter the supplication in a careless or ineffectual manner.

Nor

Nor will the solemn and energetic petition which concludes the deprecatory portion of the Litany, fail to be impressive upon the people, when the priest himself is sensible, how much he stands in need of divine aid under all the circumstances and in all the stages of his mortal career, in prosperity as well as adversity, and particularly that he will require the support and deliverance of his Lord and Saviour, "in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment."

The beautiful and comprehensive form of General Thanksgiving, cannot surely be spoken with impropriety by any minister, who thoroughly understands, and

and feels the language and sentiments of that admirable composition.

Let me then once more press upon the younger clergy, the advantage, indeed the necessity, of reading the service of the Church with the greatest attention and devotion. The young divine who is endowed by nature with talents for speaking, must not suppose his own exertions are unnecessary; and those on whom these gifts are not bestowed with so liberal a hand, must use care and diligence to improve the few talents, with which they are intrusted. A parochial minister therefore should consider, that under whichever of the above descriptions he may rank,

rank, study and attention is equally requisite.. The want of these will not be compensated by a good voice, and a melodious tone ; and by study and attention, a less pleasing delivery may be made effectual to the most beneficial purposes. Let the minister fully comprehend the language and sentiments of the service of our Church, and be intent upon the solemn office he is performing, and whatever may be his natural talent for speaking, he will, I am persuaded, read with that correctness in stop and emphasis, that distinct and deliberate, yet not tedious delivery, and that proper tone from a creature to the Creator, which will communicate to his congregation

tion a becoming frame and disposition of mind.

The next branch of the parochial minister's duty is preaching, and if properly performed, it is a most useful part of his public labours. In his discourses from the pulpit, the servant of Christ is to explain the doctrines, and enforce the precepts of his divine Master. The different seasons appointed by the Church, for commemorating the different remarkable events in the life of our blessed Lord, afford him opportunity of calling the attention of his congregation to the leading doctrines of our religion.

The four weeks set apart for considering the ADVENT of the Redeemer, he may well employ in  
the

the manner pointed out by the Church ; in, preparing the minds of his flock, to make a proper use of the approaching celebration of the *first coming* of Christ, by turning their reflections to His *second coming* to judge the world.

Following the order of the Collects he may begin with urging them to pray for the grace of God, and to use their own exertions, " that they may cast away the works of darkness and put upon them the armour of light," in full assurance that their Redeemer will sit in judgment upon them ; that the same Jesus, who with unbounded humility came down from Heaven, to visit and bring salvation to mankind, will in the last day,

day, come again in power and great glory, to reward every one according to his deeds ; that they who have worked the works of darkness here, will have their portion with the devil and his angels hereafter ; but all who have walked as children of light, will "rise to the life immortal."

He may on the next Sunday direct the attention of his congregation to the Holy Scriptures ; not to the mere perusal of them, but shewing the necessity of applying the mind, "to mark and inwardly digest them," he may impress upon his flock that by patient application they will receive such inward comforts from God's Holy Word, as will lead them on from strength

strength to strength, and give them the best hope of man, the blessed hope of everlasting life.

On the third Sunday in Advent, the Church awakens the attention of her members to the duty, and the proposed effects, of the Christian ministry. The pastor may on this day explain the nature of the ministerial office, and urge upon his flock the necessity of *their* co-operation in the highly important work to which *he* is called ; that the minister and steward of Christ, may open to the people the great mystery of godliness ; he may prepare and make ready the way, but unless they will add to this preparation, and to the assistance God gives them through the Holy Spirit,

Spirit, their earnest endeavours to keep their disobedient hearts in the way of God's laws, and in the work of his commandments, when He who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Ghost shall appear at the end of the world, they will not be found acceptable in his sight.

Still looking to the same object, the impressing upon Christians the design and end of Christ's coming into the world; namely, to cause mankind to be holy here, that they may be happy hereafter, the minister may, like the Church, conclude Advent with instructing his parishioners from the pulpit, to beg the help of God in working out that salvation, the merits and sufferings

ferings of the Redeemer have procured for them ; that through His help they may so run as to obtain the prize, an inheritance in Christ's kingdom in heaven. He may explain to his flock, that they can do nothing of themselves, but they can do every thing through Christ who strengthens them. They must, and will, be sore let and hindered by the spiritual enemy in their mortal career, but greater is He that is for, than he that is against them ; and that if they use earnest prayer, and their own endeavours, the bountiful grace and mercy of God will make them conquerors, through the satisfaction of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and our Lord and Saviour.

The

The nativity of the Redeemer, with all the circumstances and effects attending it, will furnish matter for discourses during the season of CHRISTMAS. Not only may the accounts given by the Evangelists, of the birth of Jesus, compared with the predictions of the prophets, be brought forward to prove that our Blessed Lord was the promised Deliverer, but the joyful *results* of these glad tidings may be enlarged upon: that man dead in trespasses and sins, received in the birth of his Saviour a new birth to life and immortality, regenerate, and born again, by admission into the Christian covenant, he became the child of God by adoption; and, attended continually

tinually by the Holy Spirit, he may through faith and obedience, attain eternal happiness.

At the EPIPHANY the minister may shew to his flock, how full the Sun of Righteousness has risen upon them ; how the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ has shone round them from their cradle, and therefore it is incumbent upon them to walk as children of light.

The season of LENT marks itself as the proper time to enforce the doctrine of repentance ; to declare the mercy of God to the truly repentant sinner, and the vengeance threatened in the Scripture to the hardened and impenitent.

GOOD FRIDAY, "a day to be much

much observed," when the Son of God, giving up the ghost on the cross, "finished" the redemption of man, will naturally suggest to the mind of the pastor, suitable meditations to be recommended to his flock. Let me however hint to the young parochial minister, that in these times, it will be expedient to press strongly on his people, the necessity of Christ's *atoning sacrifice* to man's salvation; that all had through Adam's transgression become children of wrath, and must have perished without the gracious intervention of a *divine Redeemer*.

The events which occurred to the Redeemer of fallen man from his

his expiring upon the cross till he was seen to go up into heaven, with the wonderful circumstances attending them, afford ample matter for discourses through the season of EASTER. The death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord are Christian doctrines, necessary to be explained, and enlarged upon, to a Christian congregation ; and the conversations of our blessed Saviour with his apostles and disciples, toward the close of his ministry, are so interesting, that the well-furnished pastor can be at no loss for instruction to his flock at this time.

The remarkable, and highly important events of the day of Pentecost, which first witnessed the de-

scent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, to guide *them*, by an *extraordinary inspiration* into all truth, and to assist with his *ordinary influence* every *disciple* of Christ in *every age*, will plainly point to the subject of the WHITSUNDAY's discourse.

In these days, when so many erroneous notions respecting spiritual influence are abroad, the watchful pastor, sound in the faith once delivered to the saints, and attentive to the high charge committed to his trust, will deem it his indispensable duty, to take this opportunity of laying before his flock explicitly, and unequivocally, what is revealed to us in the Scripture concerning the operations of the Holy Spirit, to be expected

pected at this time ; that the extraordinary aid hath ceased, and that we are now to look only for that assistance of the Blessed Spirit, promised and afforded to every Christian, and to be no otherwise perceived than by the *fruits* of the Spirit ; that our perception of the affliction in the spiritual life, is similar to that of the wind in the operations of nature. We *know* the *wind blows* because it *removes objects* opposed to it, and *purifies* the atmosphere ; so we are *assured* the *Holy Spirit operates* when we perceive that it *removes* the works of the *flesh*, adultery, fornication, variance, wrath, and heresies ; and *produces* in the *subject* love, peace,

long-suffering, faith, meekness and temperance.

The Sunday after Whitsunday is appropriated by the Church, to consider the doctrine of the TRINITY. This subject may be thought by some too abstruse for a common congregation ; but surely as a doctrine, and a material doctrine, of the Christian Church, it is necessary to be laid before the people. A minister will not, I think, do his duty if he withhold from them so essential a branch of the Christian faith. Completely to unfold a mystery is a contradiction in terms ; to attempt to be wise beyond that which is written is folly ; but whatever Scripture reveals to us should

should be declared to an assembly of Christians ; and enough is revealed, to assure us that there is one God, and, in the Godhead are three Persons. We have ample testimony in Holy Writ, of the existence; and the distinction in person, of the Father; the Son, and the Holy Ghost ; of their equality in omnipotence, omniscience, and other divine attributes ; and of the exertion of the different persons in the Godhead, for different benefits to man. All this may, I think, be so laid before a congregation of ordinarily endowed Christians, as to give them as much real information upon the subject as perhaps their more enlightened brethren pos-

sess; and may be so practically summed up, as to impress their minds with the duty of giving thanks to God the Father, for His goodness in creating them; to God the Son, for His mercy in redeeming them; and to God the Holy Ghost, for His kindly influence to sanctify and enable them to work out their salvation—to cause them to join with heart as well as voice in praying that the Holy, Blessed and Glorious Trinity, three Persons and one God, would have mercy upon them miserable sinners.

With Trinity Sunday, the Church in the Collects, Epistles and Gospels closes her doctrinal instruction ; and from thence to the return of Advent, appropriates them

them to practical Christianity. The parochial minister cannot perhaps follow a better rule. Having in the former part of the year fully instructed his flock in the doctrines, let him in the latter part enforce upon them the duties of the Gospel.

Some years ago an outcry was raised against the great body of the clergy for preaching too much on the subject of morals, and neglecting the leading doctrines of the Gospel. The outcry I fear was raised with no good intention, and the charge I am persuaded was, in general, without foundation. I believe however, sober churchmen were at that time so disgusted with the sermons of some preachers,

who were unceasingly bringing forward certain doctrines for the sake of perverting them, that there were parochial ministers who, through fear of running into this, were verging toward the opposite extreme : in avoiding the whirlpool they approached perhaps rather too near the rock ; they allotted more than the just proportion of their discourses to the preceptive part of Christianity. But the morals insinuated in the accusation, the morality of the heathen philosopher, the rule of duty to be practised by men without relation to the Almighty Jehovah, I believe seldom if ever formed a subject for the Christian preacher. It is the duty of the parish priest to discourse,

discourse, and largely to discourse upon morality—the morals of the Gospel—that rule of conduct to be practised by a Christian toward his neighbour and himself, enjoined by our blessed Lord, and enforced by the assurance of future reward or punishment.

Let the watchful pastor by no means be negligent in the *doctrinal* part of his instruction; in declaring to his congregation the whole Christian scheme. But let him not forbear to appropriate, in whatever manner he sees best, a due portion of his discourses to the *practical* part of Christianity. Let him impress strongly upon the minds of his hearers, that the redemption of man is a covenant,—

a promise with *condition*: a gracious indeed and merciful covenant, a promise on the part of God, *unmerited* in the smallest degree by man, graciously and freely to give eternal happiness to mankind on *condition*, that they believe in Jesus and obey his commands, and that his commands enjoin His disciples to live in the constant practice of those *moral rules* prescribed by God under the Law, and confirmed, extended, and spiritualized by our Saviour under the Gospel.

Such is the general plan I recommend for the discourses of the year; namely to devote the period from ADVENT to TRINITY Sunday to *doctrinal*, and from thence to the

the return of ADVENT to *practical* subjects.

A question then arises, how is the young divine to furnish himself with sermons? Is he to depend entirely upon his own compositions or to seek assistance from the compositions of others?—There is I believe scarcely a young man who, upon his first entering into the Church, possesses a stock of divinity and a facility in composition, sufficient to produce even one sermon every week of such matter, and in such language, as he would wish to deliver before a moderately well informed congregation, without bestowing upon his discourses that time which should be employed in other branches of his

duty, equally useful and necessary. This preparation for his public, would greatly interfere with the private labours of the parish priest; he would doubtless attend to the particular calls of the sick and distressed, but he must omit much of the constant attention from the pastor to his flock, which I deem indispensable to the proper performance of the ministerial office. But if it did not interfere with this part of his duty, every moment appropriated to the study would be employed in composition, he would be constantly at work upon his stock of knowledge at a time when he should be increasing his store: for let a young man be ever so industrious before

before his ordination, he will still be in want of much professional information after that period. In the early part of his ministry, he should allot a portion of his time to the study of divinity. Many professional subjects there are in which he must proceed step by step, to which he must turn his thoughts as his knowledge increases and his mind opens. All these necessary duties must be neglected if his whole time and attention is occupied in preparing for the Sunday's discourses.

I do therefore think it is not only allowable, but advisable that a young parochial minister, when he is first ordained to his cure, should take assistance from the sermons

sermons of others; let him raise his own stock by degrees, and during that time let him procure good and plain discourses, and study them so as to enter into the spirit and drift of the authors: he will by this means not only make them in a great measure his own in the delivery, but if he selects with judgment, they will be a useful study to him in composition. But although I advise my young friends to seek *assistance*, I by no means recommend them to be *intirely dependent* upon others for their discourses. However unfavourable may be their talent for composition, and how much soever they may be occupied by their parochial labours, let some portion

portion of their time be allotted to compose sermons ; exercise in composition will encrease the facility, and their compositions will very much assist them more effectually to perform the parochial part of their duty. "Reading," says Lord Bacon, "maketh a full man ; conference a ready man ; and writing an exact man." Writing makes a man exact not only in his language but in his train of thought : nothing gives such clear and correct ideas upon a subject as putting down the thoughts on paper. When a pastor in visiting his flock is required to speak upon any topic, he will find great advantage if that topic has been the subject of a sermon he has composed.

posed. His mind will be better stored, than it otherwise would have been, with weighty and proper arguments, and he will have a greater flow of language to enforce them.

Let then the parish priest, so soon as he enters upon his office, begin to compose a few sermons upon the leading doctrines and duties of Christianity. On doctrinal points he may begin with 1st The necessity and the efficacy of true repentance. 2ndly, The nature of the Christian covenant, shewing the extent of redemption on the part of God, and the conditions required on the part of man. 3dly, The obligation of complying with the ordinances of our Saviour

viour, particularly pressing the partaking of the body and blood of Christ in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

In practical Christianity he will perhaps find honesty and brotherly love, as duties to our neighbour, temperance and chastity as duties to ourselves, subjects of the most general utility in his private labours. On these and such topics of Christian doctrine and morals, I strongly recommend every young divine to put down his thoughts in the form of sermons. This will train him to a facility in composition, it will give him the habit of thinking, and it will furnish him with matter and language to discourse on points upon

upon which he will frequently be called to speak.

Is he required to attend the sick bed of a worldly Christian, who content to give the forms and ceremonies of religion to God, has allowed his heart and affections to be engrossed by the interests and pleasures of this life, and who perhaps has indulged in vices, which although unrestrained by the laws of man, yet will incur a heavy penalty from the righteous Judge of all the earth, before whose tribunal he must one day stand? his sermon upon repentance will come to his aid ; he will have language and arguments to declare with perspicuity the nature, and to urge with force the necessity

necessity, of true repentance; to shew that the only certain sign of repentance is amendment, and that unless we do turn from our evil ways we shall not save our souls alive.

Should he be summoned to a repentant sinner sinking under the weight of his former iniquities, fearing that his sins are too many, and too grievous to be forgiven; having collected his thoughts upon the atonement of our Lord, and thrown them into language for the pulpit, he will be enabled to enter fully into the subject—to speak comfort to the wounded spirit—to cheer the humble and sincere penitent—to assure him that Christ died to save *all* sinners, who *so*  
*repent*

*repent of their sins as to forsake them, and who so believe in Jesus as to follow his precepts.*

There is no duty of more high and positive obligation, than that of complying with the ordinance of our Saviour in attending the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; and yet it is a duty much neglected. This is a subject therefore upon which the parish priest will have frequently to speak; a subject upon which he should always be ready to throw in a word when opportunity offers. To the sick he will sometimes have to explain the nature of the Institution, and the necessity of complying with it, to prepare them in a short time and under the distraction of pain and

and weakness, for the first observance of that earnest request, and express command of their Saviour. Let the parochial minister reflect upon this, and he will perceive the propriety of using every means to make himself master of the subject; to have matter for a long conversation if required, and to be able to compress, if necessity demand it, all the material parts of his discourse into a narrow compass.

To the healthy as well as to the sick a few hints upon Christian morals are often requisite, and may often be given with advantage, in the walks of the village pastor. His practical discourses will furnish him with matter and language for

for friendly admonitions of this kind. Let me then repeat, that whatever press of other business may crowd upon the young parochial minister, I recommend him to find time early to prepare for the pulpit a few sermons, on the doctrinal and practical subjects, upon which he will have such frequent calls to discourse in his private ministerial duties.

The intent of a discourse from the pulpit, is to explain the doctrines and enforce the duties of religion. Upon a subject of such high importance, it behoves the preacher to be careful his sermon is so arranged, as to make his instruction intelligible, and to assist the recollection of his hearers.

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For this purpose a few divisions are useful, indeed necessary ; but numerous divisions and sub-divisions, confuse the composition, and perplex the auditors. No general rule can be laid down ; some subjects require more divisions, some fewer ; but care should be taken on the one hand, to admit no more than are needful, and on the other hand to guard against that uninterrupted flow, “ which,” as archbishop Hort observes, “ glides like a smooth stream over the soul, leaving no traces behind it.” A discourse from the pulpit cannot, I think, in general be effectual to the purpose for which it is intended, namely, to explain a portion of Scripture and draw practical

practical inferences from it which may be useful to the hearers in future life, if it consist of less than three divisions. First, An Exordium or opening to shew the meaning and general drift of the text. Secondly, The body of the sermon, wherein the particular doctrine or duty in the contemplation of the preacher is to be explained and illustrated, and Lastly, the Application, to bring home to the congregation the particular point he wishes to enforce upon their belief or practice. The language of a sermon cannot be too *plain*, but it may be too *familiar*; for in our discourses from the pulpit the mode of speech should be more close

close and dignified than when we speak, even on the same subjects, at other times and in other places. The *texture* of a sermon, if I may so express myself, should be *firm*—the expressions nervous—the style didactic not colloquial. But whilst the preacher shuns *familiarity*, let him take *simplicity* as his guide, particularly in the explanatory part of his discourse; and even in the application, which will admit, as Bishop Burnet says, of “such tender touches as may soften, and such deep gashes as may awaken the hearers,” “yet in this,” as the same author observes, “he should be clear and short, very weighty, and free from any thing that looks like the affectation of wit and elo-

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quence; here the preacher must be all heart and soul, designing the good of his people."

If a young divine has composed his discourse, he will not often speak it ill; most men deliver their own sentiments naturally, with proper emphases and proper stops. If he takes the composition of another, let him study it thoroughly, so as to enter into the views of the author, the drift and force of his arguments, and he will seldom fail to interest his congregation.

The next duty of the minister I shall mention is catechising the children. This is a mixt duty, being both of a public and a private nature. The children are, according

cording to the rules of the Church, to be publicly catechised during some part of the year. It is highly useful both to young and old, to give at this time an explanatory lecture upon that excellent summary of doctrinal and practical Christianity. The parochial minister however must not satisfy himself with catechising the children in public, and preaching his catechetical discourses ; by adding his private exertions, the advantage of his public labours will be greatly increased. He should take some method of examining in private, whether those young persons who are advancing to riper age, understand what they repeat. In early years all we must expect in

teaching the catechism, is to store the memory of the young Christian with sound doctrine and pure precept; and when the understanding opens, these will be brought into use and practice. As therefore the minds of our young charges expand, our instruction should keep pace with their expansion; we should excite, and increase the thirst after religious knowledge, and assist in the attainment of it. Many excellent expositions of the Church Catechism are in print; the best I have seen, is "The Church Catechism broke into short Questions;" very full, and at the same time plain, and comprehensible by ordinary capacities; admirably adapted to give

give the younger Christians a knowledge of their religion, and to lead them to the practice of its duties. But I fear in too many instances, this, like the Catechism, is repeated merely by rote. The only method, in my opinion, of ascertaining whether the children who are arrived at an age to understand the Catechism, do comprehend it, and of leading them to reflection, is to vary the questions in such a manner that the answers required must be given in their own words; an exercise of this kind will imprint on their minds as well as on their memories, the rudiments of Christianity; it will train them to the habit of thought, and of that description of thought

which is of the greatest importance to their best interests; it will cause them to reflect upon the existence and omnipotence of the Creator, the merciful and gracious plan of man's redemption through the Divine Mediator; and the aid afforded by the Holy Spirit to enable him to overcome the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to exert an earnest and constant endeavour to obey the precepts of the Gospel.

There is another branch of the parish priest's duty, which like that I have just mentioned, demands both his public and private exertions. I mean the preparing young persons for confirmation. This like the publicly catechising the children

children, is an opportunity not to be lost, of impressing upon his whole flock, old as well as young, the nature and obligations of the Christian Covenant. Whenever therefore the Bishop gives notice of his intention to confirm the young persons in the parish who are properly qualified, the minister should make this rite, with all its attendant doctrines and duties, the subject of his discourses. But this is not all, he must use his exertion to bring the candidates for confirmation to him as early as possible, that he may learn the extent of their knowledge, and privately instruct the more ignorant. The intent and purpose of this rite are easily explained, and most of

the candidates I have examined, whose religious education had not been totally neglected, if they did not understand the nature and design of Confirmation, I have found readily to comprehend a short explanation of it. They have appeared to be sensible, they were themselves to enter into the engagements made for them at their baptism, and what these engagements were; that renouncing all sin and wickedness, they were to believe the doctrines, and obey the precepts of the Gospel.

At the age for Confirmation, young persons are just entering the most important and dangerous period of their lives. In the height of youthful ardor, they are going

going to encounter the temptations of the world ; and the thoughts and habits of a few years at this time, generally give a bias to the future conduct. Let the careful pastor by no means lose the opportunity now afforded him, of urging upon this part of his flock, the necessity of the greatest consideration, and watchfulness ; to press upon them, the observance of religious duties, and carefully to avoid the company of the dissolute, and the haunts of intemperance. And particularly let him earnestly recommend them to take the first opportunity of attending the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The too common neglect of this sacred ordinance, is, I am persuaded,

greatly owing to young persons not presenting themselves at the Holy Table so soon as confirmed. They postpone the duty from time to time, until they turn their backs upon the Altar without compunction or consideration—or groundless fears arise—or they are drawn into that course of life, which is no unreasonable or imaginary hindrance to their spiritually partaking of the body and blood of the Redeemer. But if as soon as qualified they receive this sacrament, all these consequences will most probably be avoided : they will experience the comfort, and continue in the habit of a constant attendance at the Lord's Supper. Having a knowledge of the nature of

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the institution, they will not be disturbed by groundless fears; and the consideration generally induced by this act of devotion, with the blessing we may expect upon the use of all appointed means of grace, will preserve them from those sins which render them unfit to approach the Table of their Lord on earth, and will render them equally unfit to be inhabitants of his kingdom in Heaven.

OF THE  
PRIVATE LABOURS  
OF THE  
PAROCHIAL CLERGY.

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"He understands but little of the nature and obligations of the priestly office," says Bishop Burnet, "who thinks he has discharged it by performing the public appointments."

Various certainly, and of the highest importance are the private duties of the parish priest. To visit  
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the sick—to pay attention to the schools where children of the lower orders are instructed—and above all, to keep up that intercourse with his parishioners which will give him an insight into their manners and habits, should form a considerable part of his occupation.

The visiting the sick stands foremost amongst the private labours of the parochial minister. An inspired writer, one of the Apostles, who conversed with our Blessed Lord after His resurrection upon the things concerning His kingdom, has left a direction, that when Christians are visited with sickness, they shall send for their spiritual guides; “Is any sick

sick among you," says St. James; "let him call for the elders of the Church and let them pray over him." And our Church has enjoined her clergy not only to attend on such occasions, but to resort to those who are by them known to be dangerously sick. (Canon 67.)

The attentive pastor, therefore, will not wait till he is summoned, but on the first intimation that one of his flock is indisposed, he will consider that there his duty calls, and thither he will repair. Nor will he content himself with going through the appointed offices in a perfunctory manner, with merely reading the visitation prayers, or administering the Sacrament of the

Lord's

Lord's Supper. He will consider this is an opportunity of giving that spiritual advice of which, from his knowledge of the patient, he may be aware he stands in need. —This is sometimes a season of advantage that may never return, a favourable minute for fighting the grand adversary with his own weapons, and gaining a victory over him. The great *enemy* of the soul, we learn from Scripture, is constantly walking about, seeking and watching for every moment of weakness to ensnare mankind. *His power* is now weakened, all earthly considerations are vanishing from the sight of a being, who feels perhaps, for the first time, that he is mortal. Let the minister seize this

this fortunate, this favourable hour, given to him for pressing upon his parishioner the importance of religion, and opening a way for the wandering sheep to return into the path of piety and virtue. When such an opportunity occurs, of awaking to a sense of his duty the transgressor of God's laws, or rousing the attention of a careless Christian, it should not be allowed to pass by; returning health may harden a heart softened only by sickness ; and a hasty summons at a future period may arrive, when the lamp is in an equally untrimmed state, and, when there is no time to provide oil.

To the sinner and the worldly minded, the presence of the parish

priest

priest is particularly necessary in the time of sickness, to urge upon the one the necessity of repentance, and to shew the other the folly of that indifference in his spiritual concerns, which he so anxiously avoids in his temporal affairs. To the former, let the minister of God declare, how plainly and explicitly the divine wrath is denounced in Scripture against a life of wickedness, against wilful habitual sin ; that God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and that none shall enter into the kingdom of heaven but those who work righteousness. Upon the latter let him strongly impress this momentous truth, that the Almighty must be served "with a perfect

a perfect heart and a willing mind," that although no particular vice may lie heavy on his conscience, yet this will not atone for the absence of every active virtue and of all vital religion—that God and mammon cannot be served at the same time; two masters whose commands are so diametrically opposite, cannot be obeyed. If we hold to the god of this world, we must despise the God of Heaven. By a fond attachment to earthly things, we break the first and great commandment of loving the Lord our God with all the mind, and soul, and strength. Upon both however should be carefully inculcated, that whenever the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness

ness that he hath committed; and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive; that no truly repentant sinner is rejected by our heavenly Father, the returning prodigal is received with complacency, and even with satisfaction; that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. This is the time for him who is set to watch for the souls of his parishioners, to discourse both upon the terrors and upon the mercies of the Lord, to use every method to persuade the *nominal* to become a *real* Christian. This is a time when he must be heard, and when he will most probably be attended to; the power of the spiritual enemy is, as I have before

before observed, in a great degree fallen, and the spiritual guide is placed upon the vantage ground.

Though the presence of the pastor is most necessary to this description of his sick parishioners, and though success will generally attend his labours, yet sometimes the good seed will be scattered on very unfavourable soils ; it will lie neglected on the mind hardened by a too close adherence to the world, and it will barely meet with a reception from the dull and stony heart : his advice he will find in some cases received with indifference, and his prayers joined in with coldness.

These uncomfortable visits however, will be compensated by his atten-

attendance upon the virtuous, devout, sensible part of his flock. He will frequently experience the satisfaction of sitting at the side of a pious Christian, called by the will of his Heavenly Father to suffer under disease or sorrow, humbling himself beneath the chastizing hand of God, and resigned to all the dispensations of his providence. He will find him viewing with indifference the things which merely concern this world, and fixing his mind upon the things eternal; looking back with comfort upon a life spent in an earnest endeavour to please God, and forward with hope, that through the merits of the Redeemer, he shall enjoy

enjoy a state of rest and peace in Christ's kingdom in Heaven.

Here the labour is sweet; all is comfort; the temporal circumstances of the sufferer must awaken a sympathetic sorrow, but the prospect into the eternal state of his parishioner, will cause the well-instructed pastor, to sorrow with such a hope as will turn his mourning into joy.

Often have I met in the humble cottage with that religious polish, if I may so express myself, which would not have disgraced a more exalted situation; I mean that calm resignation to the will of Heaven, which neither on the one hand repines under pain of body,

body, or anguish of mind, nor on the other hand, with a boisterous fortitude, resists, as it were, the chastisements of the Lord. This mind, and this manner truly characteristic of the gentle Christian, I have found under the lowly roof of the cottager as well as in the mansion of his more wealthy neighbour. The hours passed with this part of our flocks do, (as no doubt the will of our Blessed Master is that they should) repay us for the painful moments we experience with those of a different description.

Under these circumstances we should be very careful whilst we pay attention to the former, that we do not neglect the latter; we must

must by no means cast off all hope even of the most profligate and obstinate ; if we are not instant out of season, let us be urgent in season ; let us take every favourable opportunity of rousing the thoughtless and the sinner to a sense of their duty. Our chief attention however must be given to the religious part of our parishes ; this portion of our flocks alone it is which will admit of our constant attendance : and here likewise we have to guard against partiality ; the manners and habits of some will be more engaging and pleasant than those of others, though all may have an equal claim to our fostering care, and receive equal comfort and advantage

tage from our visits. Upon all the virtuous and devout then, whatever may be their personal deportment, or domestic arrangements, let us bestow equal attention ; let us shew the same earnestness and solicitude for their temporal and eternal welfare.

It is not upon the sick in body only that the attendance of the spiritual guide is required, it is by no means less useful and necessary to those who are under the pressure of mental affliction. When the sources of our enjoyment in this world dry up, from no earthly well can we draw the waters of comfort; in vain will the wounded mind seek relief in dissipation ; it must look for con-

solation to the living water, which religion alone can give. To apply this remedy is the office of the minister of religion. His part it is to remind the sufferer, that with whatever calamity he is visited, it comes from the hand of the Almighty ; that all His dispensations are wise, all are merciful ; that although they may at present be grievous, yet they will in the end work together for good, if we serve, and love, and obey God ; if we submit with resignation to all his disposals, and say with holy Job, " blessed be the name of the Lord."

The sick in mind as well as body, let me repeat, are under the peculiar care of the parochial minister,

nister ; and therefore let me hint to my younger brethren, that in the most common, and the heaviest calamity which befalls man in this mortal state, the loss of those upon whom he is dependent for a large portion of his earthly happiness, they will often find a few visits most comfortable and beneficial. The removal of a companion, a counsellor, or a guide, is always a bitter part of the Lord's cup ; and sometimes it pleases God, for wise and good purposes, to pour out his cup to the dregs ; to take away what he has given, with aggravated circumstances of affliction. Here it requires all the aid of religion to support the sufferers. This aid it is the duty of the parish priest to

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administer, and the attentive Shepherd, who knows his flock, and is known of them, will generally be able to do it with success. That voice which has been accustomed to sooth their less weighty cares, that well-known voice, will now be able to speak comfort to the agitated and troubled mind. Whenever therefore death has made a chasm in a family, especially under peculiar circumstances of distress, the parochial minister should throw himself in the way of giving the only consolation that can be afforded in such a case. If he perceives his listening to the tale of woe gives relief to the mourner, and his discourse raises the mind to the only source of peace and comfort,

## FOR

comfort, his reward, from the inward satisfaction he experiences, will be great; should he be unsuccessful, he may still rest satisfied that he has done his part.

Having mentioned what I conceive to be the duty of the pastor in his general conduct to his parishioners, under the various distresses to which they are subject in their passage through this world, I will proceed to give a few hints relating to those particular duties of the ministerial office, for which the Church more expressly directs him to attend the sick: these are, "to pray over them," and to administer to them the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

The form of prayer, ordered by

our Church to be used in visiting  
the sick, is most excellent. It is  
admirably calculated to impress  
upon the mind of the sick Christian,  
the power, and providence, and  
the infinite mercies of the Almighty;  
and to make him bow with humble  
submission under the correcting  
hand of God, in imitation of his  
crucified Redeemer. It leads him  
to prepare for the termination of  
his distemper, whatever that ter-  
mination may be. Should the  
Almighty see fit to restore him to  
health, it reminds him, that he  
must devote the residue of his life  
to the service of his Heavenly Fa-  
ther and Benefactor; but should  
the warning voice prove a sum-  
mons to quit this world, it instructs  
him

him to pray, that God in his infinite mercy would, and to act in such a manner, that a God of infinite justice may, take him into his favour, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord.

This excellent form should by no means be neglected ; but still the parochial minister may seek other assistance in this part of his duty. Many diseases and infirmities continue a great length of time ; and in these cases his attendance is long required : a change of devotion is then very desirable. There are likewise particular afflictions of body and of mind, which call for particular prayers. For these purposes I recommend “The Clergyman’s Companion in

visiting the Sick." In this collection are prayers adapted to different occasions ; and there are few circumstances either in those evils that happen to the body, or the moral evils that assault and hurt the soul, to which the minister will not find some appropriate form of devotion. The prayers are all plain and impressive ; and I have found the best effects from using them ; they have appeared to comfort the mind under bodily affliction, and to lead it to those meditations which were likely to be of permanent service. The young pastor will, I think, find this book a valuable companion in his parochial walks.

There are few Christians, who  
have

have been in the habit of attending the Lord's Table, that are not desirous of receiving the Sacramental bread and wine, when a severe illness portends an approaching dissolution. To this the minister is, of course, ready to accede. He should however go a step farther, and recommend this duty whilst the patient's body and mind are equal to the exertion. It surely must be well pleasing in the sight of God, openly to declare, in this manner, a continued faith in the Redeemer to our latest hour ; to employ the closing scene of life, in this compliance with the affectionate desire, and positive injunction, of our Blessed Saviour.

Too often, however, is the paro-

chial minister called to the sick bed of a professed disciple of Christ, who has lived many years in the total neglect of this Christian duty. A favourable opportunity now offers, to urge the necessity of obeying this command of his Saviour ;—to point out that the **LORD'S SUPPER** is a *Sacrament*, and equally obligatory upon us with **BAPTISM** ;—that it was not only instituted for a continual *remembrance* of Christ's sacrifice for us, but is one of *His appointed means of Salvation* ;—that we are told, by our Blessed Lord himself, “unless we eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, we have no life in us.” Now the interesting account of our Lord's

last

last Supper with his disciples, when in the most clear and positive manner he instituted this sacred ordinance, will excite attention ; it will probably strike with force and conviction, and he who through careless indifference, or on account of inadmissible excuses, has heretofore turned his back upon the Lord's Table, may, if he survives, become in future a regular communicant.

Let the parish priest therefore consider, that his duty to the sick, in respect of the Lord's Supper, is not only to administer it to those who are desirous of this comfortable Sacrament, but to explain the nature of the ordinance to the ignorant, and to urge the necessity

of complying with the command of our Redeemer, upon those who have perhaps, to a late period of their lives, neglected this necessary means of salvation.

There is a description of persons in every parish besides the absolutely sick, which calls for the attention of the pastor ; I mean those who though not under the influence of disease, yet from age or infirmity, are unable to attend the public service of the Church. To these the Church should in some measure be carried ; the parochial minister should, as often as the extent and population of his parish will admit, visit them, read some of the prayers of the Liturgy to them, and discourse with them upon

on religious subjects. He will always find they receive comfort from these visits, and generally advantage. Their minds will be kept in a proper frame for that change to which they are approaching ; and they will by this means be kept, not only in righteousness of life, but, most probably, in the *unity* of the *Church*.

The assistance given by the minister to his sick parishioners, should not be confined to prayer and conversation ; much aid may be given them through books. There are many small tracts he may give away, and some larger works he may lend, when occasion calls for them. These may be procured on easy terms by subscribers

scribers to the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge ; and if the circumstances of the minister are such, that he cannot himself conveniently bear this expence, in most parishes I trust there will be found those, whose opulence will make them able, and their regard to the spiritual wants of the poor will make them willing, to furnish the necessary supply.

To the industrious labourer who is confined to his house by illness, a book is a great treasure. Unaccustomed to idleness, he feels in a peculiar manner the tediousness of sickness; a book relieves the weariness, and thus comes in the form of a friend ;—he has now leisure for consideration ;—sickness likewise

wise softens his mind, and opens his prospect to eternity. Under all these circumstances, favourable to religious influence, a plain and well written tract will sink deep into the heart, and the impression, most probably, will never be effaced.

The next subject which requires the parochial minister's attention, is the education of the lower order of his parishioners. Where there is an endowed school, the clergyman is generally one of the trustees; in that case, he, no doubt, feels himself called upon to use every exertion that a proper master may be appointed, and then to watch over the master's conduct. But although there may be no endowment

dowment in the parish, yet I do think it is the duty of the minister, to take care that the education of the poor, over which he may always have a sufficient influence, is properly conducted. His presence in the schools, at no long intervals, and at uncertain times, will prevent negligence ; and it will prevent an improper education in religious matters. The law most properly allows every man to worship God, and to educate his children, in that way he judges will best conduce to their temporal and eternal welfare. Far be it therefore from the parochial minister, to interfere with sectarian schools. But we too frequently find persons, who openly professing themselves

selves members of the Church, are secretly promoting schism. Many of these set up schools for the lower ranks in society, and instill into the younger minds unsound doctrines, and wild notions. The Catechism of our Church is totally neglected, or lightly esteemed ; and the prayers of our Liturgy being laid aside, their place is supplied by enthusiastic devotions. The visits of the minister to the schools in his parish, will prevent these evils ; if the teachers wish to appear orthodox, they must be really so. The examination of the children will develope the system of education, and any sinister practice will be discovered. Indeed the knowledge that the watch-

watchful pastor is in the habit of paying this attention to the instruction of the poor, will prevent the attempt. The expectation of a superintending eye is always advantageous.

Sunday schools are become so general, that there are, I believe, few parishes in the kingdom where they have not been established. Should however a parish fall to the lot of a young divine in which a Sunday-school has not been formed; I recommend him to use his utmost exertion to procure one. The advantages of the institution are great. Although the instruction to be gained there, will in few instances be sufficient for an intirely uneducated child, yet it will

will act as a stimulus in the daily school, to both teacher and scholar; the activity of the teacher, and the industry of the scholar, will be called forth, that the credit of the former may be supported, by the latter being in due time brought sufficiently forward, to take his place in the Sunday-school.

The children of the poor, especially in these days, are obliged to leave the daily school at an early age, to earn their bread by the sweat of their brows. The Sunday-school is then of material service ; it not only affords a weekly exercise and instruction in reading, but it urges the child to endeavour to retain what he has learned, that his place and credit in the class may not

not be lost. The last benefit I shall mention, which the children of the poor derive from the Sunday-school, but by no means the least, is their being taken regularly and orderly to hear the service of the Church.

The superintendance of the Sunday-school, especially in villages, rests commonly on the parochial minister; a few hints therefore respecting its management, may be serviceable to a young man inexperienced in the business. The first step is to throw the scholars into classes, either two, or three, as his judgment, and the circumstances of the parish may point out. If he is placed in a widely extended village, two classes will,  
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in my opinion, be sufficient ; in a town, or compact village, a third class may be added for the younger children who cannot read. To the highest class, if the minister can raise a fund for the purpose, a Bible, a Prayer-book, and a religious tract, may be given ; to the second class the Psalter, and to the third class a small cheap spelling-book.

When the funds will afford the books I have recommended to be given to the highest class, the advantages attending the Sunday-school extend beyond the scholar. The family are supplied with the Scriptures, and the prayers of the Church, as well as furnished with a reader ; and the tract likewise  
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is not only an exercise in reading for the child, but it is a vehicle to convey instruction, in Christian doctrine and practice, to the parents. The psalter appears to be the most useful book for the junior class; the psalms and prayers are an exercise in reading, the collects may be made an exercise for the memory, and any part will afford an examination of the child in the progress he has made in spelling. A cheap spelling-book is sufficient for the third class. But I must repeat, that in general the advantage of the Sunday-school to this class is small. Till the child is of an age to read in the psalter, he is seldom able to attend the village Sunday-school with any regularity, which

which from most of the children is probably at a considerable distance ; the instruction of an hour or two one day in the week, is not sufficient, as I have observed, to teach an entirely uneducated child to read, and the desire of getting into the Sunday-school, will animate exertion, as much as the desire of promotion from one class to another.

The last, but by no means the least important, branch of the private labour of the parish priest, is to keep up that intercourse with his parishioners, especially with those of the lower order, which will give him an insight into their manners and habits, and an influence

ence over their religious and moral conduct.

This can only be done by frequent and familiar visits; by entering into all their little cares and troubles, and, as far as he is able, relieving their distresses with his advice and assistance. By this constant communication, the minister will become acquainted with the different characters of his people, and be able to distinguish by his favour the deserving from the profligate and worthless. By his kind attention and good offices to the virtuous and orderly, they will be accustomed to fly to him in all their wants and perplexities,—to lean upon him whenever they require

quire support ;—they will feel that on him is their chief dependence ; —they will be aware that any indiscretion will not long be concealed from the ear of their watchful pastor, and the dread of losing the esteem and countenance of their best friend on earth, will be a powerful restraint upon any vicious inclination.

The intercourse between the minister and the higher ranks in his parish will not be so frequent, nor will he have that *apparent* influence over *them*, he has on the lower class. He will not be able to visit, or to discourse with them in the familiar manner he does with the cottager ; nor will they feel the continual want of his advice

and assistance, which is so necessary to the poor and ignorant. But still there may be that interchange of civility and good offices, and that readiness, on his part, to afford assistance whenever opportunities offer, which will operate powerfully, and beneficially, upon *this* description of his parishioners. The love they will bear to the man, and the respect they will feel for the minister, always on the watch for the temporal and spiritual welfare of his whole flock will be no weak barrier against the temptation to evil. The apprehension of his disapprobation, to whose opinion and judgment they are accustomed to pay a deference, will give a check to the first motions of sin; and this

this train of thought will open the ear to the still small voice of that monitor, who is ever at hand to direct us in the right way.

In this manner will the friendly communication which may, and ought to, be kept up between the pastor and his flock, have the best effect upon the general conduct of his parish. There is, however, one particular, in which his frequent visits to those of the lower rank will prove of the most essential service. Little differences must arise between neighbours ; we cannot expect the rude and ignorant to be exempt from them ; for such, I fear, are to be found in more polished life. These heats and animosities, trifling perhaps

In their origin, from the constant attention of the minister will be known to him as soon as they occur ; and will then be easily allayed : but if suffered to break out into flame, they will not so readily be extinguished ; and nothing is more detrimental to the moral order of a parish, than want of harmony.

The parochial walks of the parish priest, have however a yet higher aim than the order and regularity of his people. The first and principal object of all his labour, public and private, will be religion ; this he will lay as the foundation of virtue ; on Christian doctrine, he will build Christian morals. And much religious instruction

tion may, indeed ought to be given in private ; many doctrines and duties of the Gospel may be urged in this manner more effectually than from the pulpit. A word spoken in a favourable season, will oftentimes strike more forcibly, than the best and clearest chain of argument in a sermon. Conversation too affords opportunity of objection on the part of the instructed ; and an excuse for a sin of commission, or of omission, weighty in the scale of self-judgment, may, when brought to a more even balance, be made appear light as air. And upon this familiar intercourse with our parishioners, it is, we must rest our chief hope of counteracting the

wiles of schism, and enthusiasm ; it is by such a constant pastoral communication with our flocks, that we can be acquainted with their spiritual state, and prevent the weak and ignorant being drawn away from the Church, and all sober religion.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is an essential means of grace, an indispensable requisite in obtaining salvation ; and yet is very frequently neglected. This duty therefore should be urged upon the flocks committed to our charge, in every way likely to prove effectual ; and we shall often find, that after the solemn and impressive exhortation of the Church to partake in the Holy Com-

Communion, and various discourses from the pulpit, explaining the nature, and enforcing the necessity of complying with this injunction of our Saviour, have failed, we shall often find, that a short conversation upon the subject in private will succeed : it will dispel a doubt—or calm a fear—or answer an excuse—or awaken a negligent Christian to a proper sense of his situation ; and we shall have the satisfaction of seeing the former absenter from, become a constant attendant at, the Lord's Table.

In like manner the duty of private prayer may be more powerfully urged in a domestic visit, than in a sermon. We may press the

propriety, the comfort, the necessity, of applying to God in all our individual wants and distresses, and returning him thanks for the many particular mercies and blessings we receive, more effectually in a friendly conversation, than in a set didactic discourse. There are likewise offences against the laws of God, for the correction of which, we must rest principally on our private exhortations. Upon that too common crime, the want of chastity, we can touch but lightly in public; in private we may be more explicit in advice or reproof, and the application may be direct and personal. Indeed, religious and moral duties can, in some instances, be enforced in no other

other manner. The man who never enters the doors of a Church, cannot profit by our public instruction ; and in all cases, religious exhortation will prove most beneficial, when we can bring the matter home to the individual, and say “thou art the man.” The heart may be steeled by self-love, and self deception, against the arrow shot from the pulpit. In the general picture of vice thus held up to view, mankind are ready to perceive a resemblance to their neighbours, but seldom discover a likeness to themselves. And not only will the minister, in these friendly communications, have the advantage of the ear of his parishioners, and of making his

instruction personal, but the attention itself will very much awaken in his flock a sense of religion. The care bestowed upon their spiritual welfare will declare, in a manner all can comprehend, that the concerns of the next world are of the greatest moment; and the very urging upon them anxiously, and continually, the performing particular duties, will impress on their minds that these duties are of the highest importance.

Another branch of the pastoral office there is, which can only be performed by parochial visits; and that is, to gain an insight into the state of education among the lower class, and to learn whether those  
who

who are able to read possess the Scriptures, and the Liturgy of our Church. It is much to be wished, that in each family there should be a Bible, and a Prayer-book ; and one capable of reading them. Where this is not the case, the minister ought to use every exertion in his power, to supply the deficiency in learning or books : and in few parishes, I believe, charity and opulence are at so low an ebb, as not to afford the assistance required, if the clergyman is active in calling them forth.

The possession of the Scriptures by the lower orders, and the ability to read them, are objects very desirable to be attained ; for although the Bible is not sufficient

for religious instruction, without the aid of that ministry appointed by our Lord, to "teach all nations :" yet the reading and study of the sacred volume is greatly conducive to the knowledge and practice of Christianity. PRAYER and the Sacrament of the LORD'S SUPPER are likewise so necessary to the Christian life, that with the ability to READ, and the possession of the HOLY SCRIPTURES, they form the four cardinal objects of pastoral care.

Whenever, therefore, the parish is not too populous to admit of that familiar visitation I have recommended; or so small that there is no occasion for a memento, I advise the parochial minister, to furnish himself,

himself with a list of the families in the parish, with marks denoting the state of each in the particulars above-mentioned. By casting his eye over this register, previous to a village walk, he will perceive where his presence is most required, and what turn of conversation he is to seek, in his different visits.

If no better plan occurs to his mind, let him take the following; I have known it to be adopted, and to prove useful.

<i>Column 1</i>	2	3	4	5
	R	B	P	S
A. B. ....	+	+	-	-
C. D. ....	+	-	+	+
E. F. ....	+	=		-

The

The first column contains the name of the family.—The second, the ability or disability to read.—The third, the possession, or capability of purchasing, or want of a Bible, and a Prayer-book.—The fourth, the use or neglect of private prayer.—The fifth, the attendance, or non-attendance, at the Lord's Table. The marks, denoting the state of the family in these particulars, it will be perceived, are the algebraical characters of plus, minus, and equality; which in the above specimen are thus used.

A. B.  $\frac{R}{+}$ . There is at least one in the family who can read.  $\frac{B}{+}$   
They possess a Bible, and a Prayer book.

book. P Private prayer is neglected. S They are never seen at the Lord's Table.

C. D.  $\frac{R}{+}$  This family can read.  
B  $\frac{P}{+}$  They have not a Bible.  
 They are in the habit of private prayer.  $\frac{S}{+}$  They attend the Sacrament.

E. F.  $\frac{R}{+}$  This family can read.  
B  $\frac{P}{+}$  They are in a situation to furnish themselves with books.  
 The use of private prayer is not ascertained. S Not one of the family attends the Communion.

These, or any like short memoranda,

randa, easily noted down, will much assist the watchful shepherd, in the care and superintendance of his flock. He will have under his eye, the wants of the different branches of his spiritual family ; and he will at a glance perceive where education, where books, where advice, or reproof, is required ; and he will thus be enabled to apply the talents intrusted to him to the best advantage.

Nothing conduces so much to the order of our temporal affairs, as keeping accurate accounts. Just so is it in spiritual concerns. When we often take a view of what we owe to our flock ; when such and such debts of duty appear upon the parochial account book, we shall

shall find ways and means to discharge them as they become due. But if through inattention or negligence, we suffer them to accumulate, they may increase beyond the power of payment ; and when we are called upon to give in the account of our stewardships, we may find ourselves in that state of insolvency, from which mercy itself cannot relieve us.

The professed Christians in this kingdom, appear to be more split and divided in the present day, than they ever were before ; and proselytism rages in no common degree. The utmost vigilance of the pastor is therefore required, to preserve his flock from schism ; and no preservative is so likely to prove efficacious.

efficacious, as frequent parochial visits. By this familiar intercourse, not only the minister gains an insight into the spiritual state of his people, and is thereby enabled to give an early check to any wrong propensities, but the sheep know the shepherd ; they are convinced of his being able, and willing, to lead them in the right way ; they are acquainted with his voice, and they follow him. Where this attention is not paid, where the flock is left greatly to itself, no wonder if they go astray, and the wolf catcheth them.

In these days then, when wolves of the wildest description are constantly prowling about, seeking whom they may devour, let me advise

vise my brethren to be always upon the alert ; to be ever walking round and round the fold. Their appearance alone will contribute greatly to safety. When the watchman is seen at his post, the robber is generally deterred from his purpose. Where the minister is known to be in the habit of this intercourse with his parishioners, there the itinerant preacher, and the hawker of enthusiastic and schismatic tracts, are not inclined to pay very frequent visits ; they look for a more favourable soil, whereon to sow the seed of their wild doctrines ; some uncultivated spot, where the noxious plants are in no danger of being rooted out ; but will be allowed to grow, and expand,

expand, till their eradication is become difficult.

I would not however have the young pastor imagine, that his presence alone will be sufficient to guard the flock ; he will find various arts used to seduce them, *which* it will require his utmost watchfulness to counteract ; nor must he be discouraged, if after all his care and attention, some are drawn away from the Church ; for mistaken zeal is arrived at that height, it seems impossible, in every instance, to stem the torrent. The dispersion of tracts, inculcating the tenets of Calvin—sensible illumination—the necessity of sudden conversion—the universal negligence of the clergy—and the insufficiency

sufficiency of the Church to salvation, is a principal engine employed. These tracts are sold by hawkers at a cheap rate, or given by some person in the neighbourhood in a higher rank, with profession of peculiar anxiety for the welfare of the soul, or thrown from the window of a carriage to the lower orders. The only way to counteract this movement of heaven and earth to make one proselyte, is to meet the disease in time ; to be always at hand to discover the earliest taint, and prepared to apply a remedy.

The minister, in his cottage visits, if he looks to the shelf, will sometimes perceive, peeping out between the Bible and Prayer-book,

book, one of these little tracts; he will upon inspection find it perhaps to contain no inconsiderable portion of sound doctrine, and much practical Christianity, worked up in a plain and familiar style, well adapted to the lower class. In certain parts however, the cloven foot will appear. The reader will be directed to consult his *feelings*, whether the *new birth* has taken place, Or a story will be told how long a sinner, groaning under the weight of his transgressions, attended his *parish Church* without any *good effect*; but accidentally putting his head into a *conventicle*, the discourse of the preacher went home to his heart, and after a few struggles,

gles, he was *assured* of salvation: Or a dialogue will be introduced ; in which the parish priest is represented as a mixture of ignorance, indolence, and worldly mindedness, and the sectarian teacher as a pattern of good sense, piety, and disinterestedness.

For these insidious publications, let the eye of the pastor be always on the watch. Wherever he discovers, let him take them down, and comment upon the unscriptural doctrines, and the insinuating method of working up the poison, with so much pure Christianity. Let him point out the danger of the doctrines, and the falsity of the accusations. This my brethren will find no easy or pleasant task ; they

they will sometimes find it difficult, to make the objectionable parts sufficiently comprehended, to counteract them ; and yet these incomprehended parts, however paradoxical it may sound, will be capable of doing mischief ; for the poison is mixed up with so much wholesome religious nourishment, and in so palatable a manner to the piously inclined, but ignorant Christian, that before he understands the tenets of the enthusiast, he forms a partiality for the sect ; and is imperceptibly led on to believe their wild doctrines, and attach himself to their society. And the egotism required to answer the accusations brought against the clergy, is very unpleasan<sup>t</sup>

sant to an ingenuous mind. But the arrogance of the enthusiast, who scruples not to boast of every human excellence and virtue, as well as of immediate divine communication, calls upon us to put some constraint upon ourselves, and to meet their charges with boldness, as well as firmness. Let the Christian minister shew the erroneousness of the doctrines, from Scripture, and meet the charge of negligence with the practice, as well as the profession, of zeal and activity.

When a philosopher of old was informed, that certain persons calumniated him, he made this reply, "I will live in such a manner, that no one shall believe them."

them." Let us be ever at our posts, and attentive to the spiritual concerns of those committed to our care, and then no one will believe, what the enemies of the Church may say, respecting the negligence of the clergy.

But whatever may be the attention and care of the pastor, few instances, I fear, occur, where the flock has been preserved intire ; there will be found in most parishes some wanderers from the fold, who have attached themselves to sectarian teachers. The parochial minister must therefore consider, what is to be his conduct towards *them*. His duty certainly is to watch for, and take advantage of, every opportunity to shew  
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the light of truth to those who are in error, to fetch home, if possible, a wandering sheep. The hope however of reclaiming an enthusiast, I am afraid is small. To the man who applies to his feelings for a knowledge of his spiritual state, who believes that an immediate divine impulse imparts to him the rule of his faith, and practice, all argument drawn from reason and Scripture is thrown away ; under these impressions, the exercise of reason must be considered impiety, and Scripture is superseded. To those therefore who have forsaken the Church, who enter its doors, only when the service does not interfere with a regular attendance at the conventicle, the constant at-

tention of the parochial minister will be useless, whilst to the rest of the parish it will be detrimental.

Most of the lower class of village sectarians (who are generally methodists) would, I believe, gladly keep up a communication with their parish priest ; they would be pleased with his pastoral calls, and with his prayers in sickness. But can we, circumstanced as they are, usefully to themselves, can we conscientiously on our own parts, can we safely to others, thus attend them ? Our *prayers* may be grateful to a sick person of this description, but a deaf ear will be turned to our *doctrinal instruction* ; the religious opinions and tincture will be taken from the schismatic teacher.

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If we attend with him, our's will be the subordinate department. We can in such a case be of no material service, and if we believe an *apostolic priesthood* to be an essential part of the *Church* of Christ, by joining the unordained preacher in taking care of the soul of a parishioner, by thus placing him upon an equality with the regular pastor, we disguise our real sentiments, we virtually declare schism to be no sin, and we lead the rest of our flock into error.

The parish priest will behave with civility to those who have forsaken him ; he will, if occasion calls for it, assist them in their temporal affairs ; but in spiritual matters, he must consider them as not

within his fold. When desired to perform the offices of the Church, he will feel that his duty forbids him to refuse ; and he will readily seize this, and every other opportunity, of throwing in a word of advice ; but he should, I think, forbear the *unsolicited* attendance at the sick bed, and the familiar parochial visit.

This appears to me the best, the only line of conduct we can pursue with those, who by the artful insinuation of others, or through their own pride, and itching ears, have been enticed from the Church. The kindness due from us to them as fellow-travellers on the road of life, ought not to be withheld ; and yet I have known the common civilities

vilities of a clergyman to a schismatic parishioner, mentioned by the latter, as a proof that the former did not disapprove of his religious conduct ; and urged as an argument to induce another of his parishioners to attend the conventicle. Such attacks, however, we must meet with other weapons, than incivility and unkindness ; this ungoverned spirit of proselytism will give us uneasiness, and excite our pity, but let it not raise our anger. Christian charity should guide all our actions ; especially ought it to be our rule in spiritual concerns. But at the same time we must be careful, not to give our sanction to that mistaken, yet too fashionable liberality, of considering, or speak-

ing of, every one who names the name of Christ, as within the pale of his Church. Whenever occasion requires, let us openly and boldly declare we consider, and are by Scripture borne out in the consideration, that our Blessed Lord founded his Church on the Apostles ; and that through the *Apostolic ministry* he will continue it to the end of the world. That those, who joining themselves to *schismatic societies* forsake the *Apostolic ministry*, forsake the *Church*; —they withdraw themselves from the care of the parochial priest ;— they are virtually absent from his flock;—that although they are still included amongst the number of those who have been *authoritatively*

tively committed to our care, and of whom therefore we must give account at the awful day of judgment, yet our souls will have been delivered with respect to them—we would have “watched for their souls,” but they would not “submit” themselves to “our spiritual rule;”—that they have transferred the responsibility from us, and upon themselves will fall the effect of whatever spiritual sins, and errors, they have committed;—and that we cannot but dread they will be called upon, to answer before the tribunal of their Redeemer, for having *divided* and *distracted* His CHURCH which it was His positive *command*, and most earnest *prayer*, should be ONE UNITED BODY.

## CONCLUSION.

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THE plan I proposed when I began this little tract is now completed. I have thrown together a few hints upon the different functions of the parochial clergy.

It was far from my intention to enter into controversial points, respecting the origin and appointment of the Christian ministry, or to raise opportunities of discussing disputed doctrines. My sole object was to collect into a small manual,

manual, for the use of the younger clergy of the Church of England, some practical observations upon the duties of a parish priest, which the reading and experience of many years, passed in that situation, had suggested to a mind, deeply impressed with the importance of the ministerial office.

Upon a review of what I have written, I entertain a hope that I have not deviated from the plan laid down. The reader will be at no loss to discover my sentiments upon the constitution of the Christian Church, and he will perceive I have not forborn to intimate my opinion upon several points of doctrine, on which the ministers

and members of the Church are not perfectly agreed. But I have touched upon these matters, I trust, in so uncontroversial, and so unoffending a manner, that none of my brethren, between whom and myself there may be some shades of difference, will on that account be prevented profiting from the hints I have given them, relating to the practical part of their pastoral duties.

Respecting the execution of the plan, I am aware if the book is read, there must be various opinions. Some readers may think I have laid burdens upon the clergy, too heavy for them to bear : others will say I have placed the standard  
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of pastoral duty too low : observations will likewise be made on the style and language of the work.

I do not mean to hold at arm's length the literary critic,—or to despise the opinions of any of my brethren who may not agree with me.

Whenever a writer sends his labours into the world, the public has a right to expect, that no reasonable exertion on his part shall be wanting, to render the composition fit for its inspection ; no excuse can be admitted for errors, which a little time and attention would have prevented. From the nature of the work, the reader will not in my book seek for any thing but information. The attention therefore

therefore I have paid to the style and language, has been to give my opinions and advice in the plainest manner, and in the fewest words Nothing very uncouth, I trust, will be found in the style ; and whilst the sheets were going through the press, I have endeavoured to take out any spots and blemishes which might offend the correct eye of the literary critic.

To my brethren who may think I have not laid my rule on the exact line of pastoral duty, some considering I have deviated on one side, and some on the other side of the narrow track, to such I deem it incumbent upon me to say a few words before I conclude.

To those who consider I have given

given too much latitude to the Christian minister in his intercourse with the world, - I beg to repeat, that the human mind will not sustain continued exertion ; some relaxation from official labour is requisite, and this may and should be sought in society. To those who would deprive the clergy of all intercourse with the world, I beg to observe, that Christianity is by no means morose and ascetic, that the Gospel considers man as a social being, not abstracted and solitary ; that it teaches us to *use* the *world* and not to *abuse* it; to resist and overcome temptation, not to fly from the trials with which the Almighty sees fit to prove us in this life, to prepare

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us for the life to come. Social pleasures therefore, innocent and professional, such intermixture with the laity, I mean, as will not interfere with professional duties, nor degrade the clerical character, and these alone have I recommended or allowed to the clergy, such I repeat are, in my opinion, both lawful and expedient.

Others there may be of my brethren, especially of those for whose use these hints are chiefly intended—the younger clergy—who will think I have infringed upon their Christian liberty, imposing duties which the Church does not require from her ministers, and thus depriving them of pleasures, which in the world are deemed allowable.

lowable. The objections I apprehend will not be so much against the public, as against the private exertions I deem requisite from the parish priest. Many will admit the truth of my observations upon the performance of the public services of the Church, that the greatest care should be taken to read the Liturgy and offices with propriety, and that the doctrines and duties of Christianity should be enforced from the pulpit with the greatest earnestness ; but in requiring that constant parochial attendance, upon which I lay so much stress, I shall, I fear, by numbers of my brethren be thought fancifully to have stretched beyond all ecclesiastical rule, and filled up that time with

with pastoral labour, which might be innocently employed in worldly pursuits.

I beg in the first place to hold up my hand against custom, or strict ecclesiastical rule, being the criterion of pastoral perfection. If we measure ourselves by ourselves, we shall not be wise ; nor will exact canonical observance fulfil the pastoral duties. The general outline may be given by injunction, but the interior, the most material part of the plan, can only be filled up according to circumstances by each individual minister, from a knowledge of his parish, a due consideration of the sacred and important office to which he is appointed, and a constant impression

sion upon his mind, that the watchful eye of his Divine Master is always upon his whole Church.

A parochial minister may satisfy human law, he may escape the correcting arm of legal, and the censure of episcopal authority, and yet be wanting in his duty to the flock committed to his care and superintendance. Various attentions are required, which cannot be made the subject of human regulation, or human investigation. We, the ministers of Christ, are called upon more than any other description of servants, not to perform "eye service as men pleasers, but to do our duty as to the Lord and not unto men." We, who are so frequently reminding others

others of their great account, should ever bear in recollection, that we shall one day stand before a tribunal, where the strictest merely formal compliance with canons and constitutions, will avail no more, than did in old time the pharisaical tithing of anise and cummin; there are more important, though unprescribed duties, which must turn the balance that will weigh the Christian priest; not leaving the other undone, these ought to be, and must be done, if we hope for a favourable sentence at the last day. We must give our time, we must give our minds, to the sacred duties we have undertaken. We have dedicated ourselves to the service of

of the Church, and surely we who have engaged in this spiritual profession, are not called upon for less exertion than are those, who have entered into professions of a temporal nature. These however we shall often find wiser in their generation than ourselves, and they may afford us a useful example.

When the fleeting and perishable possessions of this world shew symptoms of taking wing, when fame and fortune are in danger, and legal aid is called in, how active is the lawyer ; how alive to the interest of his client ; his whole mind is engaged to counteract the open attacks, or the insidious arts of the opponent, that he may do his

his duty as an advocate, and procure applause and affluence as his own reward.—Let us, in watching over the eternal interest of our flocks, take example from the earnestness and assiduity shewed by the guardian of their temporal possessions. Our situations are somewhat similar; but the cause we have to plead, is of unspeakably greater importance. Let us consider, that we are constantly retained to protect the spiritual estate of those committed to our charge; that there is an adversary ever on the watch, to despoil them of their best inheritance; that it requires the utmost vigilance to guard them against his secret wiles, and constant admonition to defend them

them against his open temptations. Let us consider likewise, the dreadful consequences to ourselves of neglecting the cause we have undertaken ; and the glorious reward we shall receive if we faithfully discharge our duty. That much heavier punishment, than disgrace and poverty, will befall us in the former case, and that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the happiness we shall attain if we turn many to righteousness.

There is another temporal profession, from which the clergy may profitably take a lesson ; and opportunities for this kind of instruction frequently occur. When the spiritual

spiritual guide, and medical adviser are summoned in their respective departments to the bed of sickness, let the conduct of the physician be an example to the parochial minister. The whole mind of him who is to take care of the body, is called forth to save and heal the perishable substance ; he is ever at the service of those who require his assistance ; no unprofessional business draws him aside, no pleasures intice him from his professional duties ; he cheerfully allows the hours of his refreshment and rest to be broken in upon ; the almost hopeless case does not slacken his exertion, nor does the danger of contagion affright him from the infectious chamber.

chamber. A less degree of attention surely ought not to be paid to the soul, than is paid to the body; nor is the spiritual less subject to disease than the corporeal frame of man; it is frequently, to speak in the figurative language of Scripture, full of wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores; and requires the aid of the spiritual physician. The health of the soul, like that of the body, is likewise often undermined before the patient is aware; the contagion of bad example, or the propensities of human nature, frequently make inroads upon the unguarded heart before they are observed; and the cure becomes difficult and doubtful. In these cases let us who have the charge

of the immortal spirit, look to him who has the care of that part, which must one day return to the dust as it was; and let us be equally active and assiduous in our attendance. Let us probe the wounds of our patient to the bottom, let us find out the sins which easily beset him, awaken him to a sense of his danger, and the certain restoration to ease and health if he follows our prescription. And here we have the advantage over the attendant upon the body; we can give that assurance of health, if our regimen is pursued, which he cannot. Let the head be ever so sick, and the heart ever so faint, if the wretched sufferer will follow our directions, if he will repent

pent and forsake his sins, and turn to God in sincerity and truth, impowered by Him who cannot deceive, we may promise that his spiritual wounds shall be healed ; and he shall find rest to his soul.

Intrusted as we are with the eternal interests of our brethren, let us not be, in zeal and industry, behind those who undertake the care of their temporal concerns. Not only the *time* of the physician and the lawyer is *employed*, but their *thoughts* are *engaged* in their profession ; and unless the Christian minister in like manner fixes his *mind* upon the high and important office he has taken upon him, he cannot properly perform its duties. If his heart is given up

to the world, if temporal concerns, of any description, *chiefly* occupy his thoughts, and his clerical labours become mere bodily service, although the common demand of official duty may be discharged; and even an increased attention occasionally paid, yet there will be a failure in those things, which distinguish the “true shepherd” from the “hireling.” When the thoughts are occupied by worldly, instead of professional pursuits, the main spring to every thing that is useful and praiseworthy in the clerical character is wanting. If the parish priest would obey the command of his blessed Master, given to him in the form of a request to St. Peter,

“ to

"to feed His sheep," his heart must be in his parish ; that must not only be the sphere of his exertions, but the chief source of his pleasure and his pain. He must enter with zeal into every thing that concerns his flock ; he will, it is true, in such case, feel with keenness professional disappointment ; but he will experience professional comfort, far beyond any other satisfaction this world can afford !

Ever then, my young reader, bear in recollection, that if you would meet your Lord with joy, and not with sorrow, when the dread summons arrives to give an account of your stewardship, you must devote yourself to your profession. If you would do the work

of an Evangelist, you must *wean* your *mind* from the world; I say not, *withdraw yourself*. I must once again repeat, in the world you have duties to perform, in the world you may seek relaxation from labour; but *professional employment* must *occupy* the *thoughts*, and fill up the *hours* of *business*; neither worldly interest, nor pleasure, nor too great an attachment to unprofessional studies, must be allowed to engross the mind in such a manner, that pastoral duty becomes nearly confined to forms and ceremonies.

Consider, let me intreat you, the importance of the office you have undertaken, and the solemn engagements into which you have entered;

entered. Your office is that of a minister, a servant of Christ, set to watch for the salvation of souls ; an ambassador, sent by your Divine Master, to urge, in his stead, the cause of God and Religion against Sin and Satan ; and before the *holy altar* you have devoted yourself to the discharge of this momentous trust. Reflect daily upon the earnest exhortation you *there* received, the awful warning *then* given to you, and the solemn promises you *made* in the *presence* of God. And that you may never forget them, let me recommend to you the advice of Archbishop Hort, "to read over the offices of Ordination, once at least in every year." There can be no better

memo-

memorandum of the ministerial engagements, than the interrogatories in these sacred rites ; and no words can, I think, more strongly impress upon the mind, the weight and importance of the priestly office, than those contained in the admonition of the Bishop, to a candidate for the priesthood.

If these fail to awaken you to a just sense of the awful responsibility of the situation in which you stand ; no language I can use will prove effectual. I shall conclude therefore, in the words of the reverend father in God who sent you forth to preach the Gospel, with “ exhorting you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you have in remembrance, into how

how high a dignity, and how weighty an office and charge you are called: that is to say, to be a messenger, and watchman, and steward of the Lord; to teach and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family; to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children which are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever."

Have always therefore printed in your remembrance, how great a treasure is committed to your charge. For they are the sheep of Christ, which he bought with his death, and for whom he shed his blood. The Church and congregation whom you must serve, is his

his spouse, and his body. And if it shall happen the same Church, or any member thereof, do take any hurt or hindrance, by reason of your negligence, you know the greatness of the fault, and also the horrible punishment that will ensue. Wherefore consider with yourself the end of the ministry toward the children of God ; toward the spouse and body of Christ, and see that you never cease your labour, your care, and diligence, until you have done all that lieth in you, according to your bounden duty, to bring all such as are or shall be committed to your charge, unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness.

ness of age in Christ, that there be no place left either for error in religion, or for viciousness in life."

**FINIS.**



**AMUSEMENTS**

OF

**CLERGYMEN.**



ON  
**THE AMUSEMENTS**  
OF  
**CLERGYMEN,**  
AND  
**CHRISTIANS IN GENERAL.**

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**THREE DIALOGUES**  
BETWEEN  
**A DEAN AND A CURATE.**

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BY  
**EDWARD STILLINGFLEET,**  
LORD BISHOP OF WORCESTER.

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## AMUSEMENTS

OF

## CLERGymEN.

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WHEN Dr. Josiah Frampton's library was sold in London (in the year 1729 or 1730) his divinity books were classed in seven lots; one of which was purchased by Dr. Edwards. The catalogue of this lot mentioned a parcel of MSS. Among these the Doctor found one in Dr. Frampton's own hand-writing, of which the following is a copy:—

September 23, 1686.

I ALWAYS thought it one of the most fortunate circumstances of my life (or rather the most providential, as I ought to call it) that soon after my leaving college, I was led, by various and singular accidents, to the curacy of Wroxal in Warwickshire. Here I met with many civilities from the gentlemen of the country, particularly from Sir Roger Burgoin, who was equally distinguished for his piety and learning. At his house I frequently saw that truly venerable man, Dr. Edward Stillingfleet, afterwards Bishop of Worcester, but at that time Dean of Paul's. He had been early connected

with the Burgoin family, and ever preserved a great intimacy with them ; which he commonly renewed, every year, by a visit of two or three weeks.

What Dr. Stillingfleet saw in me, I know not : but I thought myself very unworthy of the civilities he showed me. I was certainly, at that time, a very incorrect young man. I had entered into the ministry with little attention to the duties I had taken on me to discharge. I loved society, and was fond of country diversions ; and though I was fond also of my book, I would at any time have left it for a day's diversion with the hounds —a ramble in the woods with my gun— or a game of cards, and a dance in the evening. Such as I was, however, Dr.

Stillingfleet was particularly obliging to me; and friendly enough to give me a hint, now and then, with regard to my conduct, which, I hope I may with truth say, was not lost upon me.—An opportunity, however, occurred, which enabled me to receive more than *casual* advantage from his conversation.

During one of his annual visits to the Burgoin family, he was seized with a violent fit of the gout, to which his latter years were very subject. It happened at this critical time, that Sir Roger Burgoin and his lady were called into Worcestershire to attend their mother, who lay at the point of death: and as the Dean expressed a desire for my company in their absence, I gave him as much of it as I

could ; following not more his desire than my own inclination. He was at that time engaged in correcting his *Origines Sacrae*<sup>1</sup> for a new edition ; and had brought down with him several Latin books to consult. As I could read that language with accuracy enough, I was of some little use to him. While I read, he noted with his pen the passages he wanted. The intervals were filled with conversation.

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<sup>1</sup> This very learned work was written, when Stillingfleet was under thirty years of age. A story is told of his having been put to the blush by Bishop Saunderson, his diocesan ; who, seeing a young man at his visitation, of the name of Stillingfleet, and not knowing his person, asked him, whether he were related to the great Stillingfleet, who wrote the *Origines Sacrae*.

We were sitting together, one day, after dinner ; and the Dean laying up his feet on a cushion, and being tolerably free from pain, began to rally me a little on my attachment to country diversions—a subject he had often before casually introduced ; and on which he knew I had a weak side. I had brought him two young partridges that day for his dinner ; and he began by expressing his obligations to me for my attention to him ; and then asked me some questions, which led me to give him an account of my day's exploits. I did not see his drift ; and in the spirit of a sportsman, told him, that the late rainy season had made game very scarce—that the two covies, from which I had shot the brace I had brought to him, were the only birds I had seen the whole

day, though I had been out from five in the morning till twelve at noon ; and had walked upwards of fifteen miles.

Well, said the Dean, with an affected gravity of countenance, I only wished to know the extent of my obligation to you ; and I find your philanthropy has done more for me in giving me seven hours of your time to procure me a dinner, than I could have done (even were I as able to walk as you are) for any man in Christendom.

From being a little jocular, he became, by degrees, serious. I have often thought, said he, Mr. Frampton, (and I know your candor will excuse me) that the clergy have rather injured the respectability of

their characters by mixing too much with the amusements of laymen. They not only get into a trifling way of spending their time; but by making themselves cheap, they diminish the weight of their instructions; and often give a sort of sanction by their presence to gaieties, which were better checked. It is a common speech in the mouths of licentious people, that they must be right, because they have gotten the parson along with them.—Indeed a clergyman cannot be too cautious with regard to his character. It is a matter of the greatest delicacy, and easily sullied. If he act contrary to it, he always has a consciousness about him, which makes him jealous of every eye: and when he becomes hardened, he is among the most contemptible of mankind.—You

will easily, however, understand, that when I restrict the clergyman from joining too freely with the amusements of the laity, I am equally hurt with every appearance of haughtiness and moroseness. If the character of the clergyman is not marked with modesty and humility, it is bereft of its most distinguished graces.

But, said I, Sir, may not example work the other way; and the presence of a grave clergyman be a check upon licentiousness?

Sometimes, said he, it may: and when a clergyman mixes in improper company *with this view*, and is conscious of his own powers of control, he imitates that bright example which sorted with *publicans and*

*sinners.* A very respectable clergyman, a friend of mine, having heard that a favorite youth had been decoyed by bad company into a disreputable house, went thither himself; and pretending business with the young man, sat down on a slight invitation, among a set of debauchees, trusting his character to its credit. He was a man of severe aspect, strong sense, and ready expression; and therefore well fitted for the office he undertook. For a while he overawed, by the suddenness of his appearance, the vice and folly he was mixed with. But well knowing, that in a little time the impression he made, would go off, and he might be liable to affronts, he retired, before the company could rally their impudence; and carried off with him his young

friend ; who would frequently declare afterwards, that he believed this very circumstance brought him more to recollection, than any event of his life ; and perhaps saved him from ruin.—But now, my dear Sir, though I have accommodated your argument with an example, I must add, that I think the accommodation gives it little support. I fear the *motive exemplified here* has little weight in the common intercourse between the clergy and laity.

But may not this intercourse, said I, Sir, though without any *direct view* of leading out of *immediate mischief*, still have its use ? Even the presence of a respectable clergyman, I should think, might often be a happy restraint.

Why, yes, answered the Dean ; but then, my good friend, you will consider, that a *young* clergyman can rarely act this part. Years are necessary to give respectability to *this mode* of instructive intercourse. Natural talents too, which few people possess, are necessary. A man of morose character may perhaps be of service with his pen in his closet ; but, however pious, and well-meaning, he will hardly be of much use in any of the scenes of common life. If, again, we avoid moroseness by assuming the color of our company (which must, in a degree, always be done, when we wish to reform in this way), I fear, instead of doing good, we shall do harm.

But it is a difficult matter, said I, Sir,

especially for a young man, to preserve those exact bounds of intercourse which his character may require. When he enters first into the world, and is taken notice of by those who are in a station above him, it is hardly possible for him to resist the importunities he meets with to enter into various amusements; to drink his glass freely; or make one in parties, which in fact perhaps he may not approve.

No doubt, said the Dean, it may be difficult. But do you believe that when God placed you in a state of trial, he meant that you should live without difficulties? The whole of life is a conflict: and if we do not begin early to brace on

our moral armour, and accustom ourselves to it, when are we to enter the field?—I should hope it is for want of consideration, more than any thing else, that so many young clergymen err in this matter. I could wish them to fix in their own minds certain bounds to their amusements, and remember the poet's caution,

*Quos ultra citraque, nequit consistere rectum.*

Aye, Sir, said I, these *certi fines*—this narrow path between the *citra* and the *ultra*, I have often in vain endeavoured to pursue. And if you can give me any instruction to guide my footsteps better through the amusements of life, than they have hitherto been conducted, I shall

kindly receive them, and lay them up in a grateful memory.

It is very probable, my dear Sir, said the Dean, that my rules may be stricter than you would wish to comply with. I have thought often on the subject lately, for the sake of a young clergyman, in whose well-doing I was much interested : but I had not all the success I hoped for.

I assured the Dean, I should endeavour to be a more observant disciple. I did indeed spend a considerable part of my time in amusements of various kinds ; but I was hopeful, that my errors proceeded more from inattention (the apology he was pleased to furnish) than from any bad disposition.

The good Dean was pleased to say, he believed me ; and added some other friendly expressions, which not being to our present purpose, I omit. He then asked me, what was my idea of an amusement ; or how I should define it ?

This was a puzzling question to one, who had trespassed so much on this head ; and who, having never thought much on the subject, seldom had any end but barely to please himself. I *could* have given him a definition of amusement ; but I was afraid of bringing my own practice too much within its censure. To gain, therefore, a little time for reflection, I asked, Whether he meant *amusement in general*, or confined the question to the *amusements of clergymen* ?

Why, truly, said the Dean, the amusements of all people require regulation enough. But my question, at present, relates only to the *amusements of the clergy.*

I answered, that I thought *bodily exercise* was one end ; and as to the *amusement* of the mind, I thought its only end was to relax, and fit it the better for study.

Your definition, said the Dean, is so far good : but it does not go far enough. It considers only the *purpose* of amusement : whereas it should also take in the *quality*. You will allow, I suppose, that the clerical amusement should be suited to the clerical profession ?

I allowed it certainly.

Well, then, said the Dean, we have now, I think, obtained a full definition of *clerical amusement*. It should intend the *exercise of the body, and the recreation of the mind*; but it should also be *suited to the genius of the profession*. As the first member, however, of this definition relates to amusement in general; and applies as well *ad populum*, as *ad clerum*, we will, if you please, pass it over at present. If we can establish the second part, I hope there will be no great danger of mistaking the first. I shall only, therefore, endeavour to show you, that all *clerical amusements* should be suited to the *clerical profession*.—Now, in order to throw the best light on this subject, I should

wish to consider amusements under the three heads of *riotous and cruel*—of *trifling and seducing*—and lastly, of *innocent and instructive*: for I think it very possible, that an amusement may be characterised with both these epithets, though either may be sufficient. Are these heads, added he, comprehensive enough to include all kinds of amusement? Or do you recollect any other?

I thought them sufficiently comprehensive.

Well, then, said the Dean, we will begin with such amusements as are *riotous* and *cruel*: and among these I should be inclined to assign the first rank to *hunting*. It is an unfeeling exercise, de-

rived from our savage ancestors, who hunted at first for *food*, and consigned the barbarous practice to their posterity for *pastime*. Its giving birth to forest laws and game laws—its injuring corn-lands, and destroying fences—its setting squires and their tenants, gentlemen and their neighbours, at variance—its consuming the forage of a country in breeding destructive or useless animals, in the room of such as are really useful—the riotous uproar of the chase, so opposite to the mild serenity which should characterise the clergyman—and the noisy, intemperate evening, to which it often leads ; add such an accumulation of mischief to hunting, that I should be sorry any clergyman should give his countenance to it.—To this we may add the cruelty exercised

both on the animals that pursue, and the animals that are pursued—the horse pushed to the last extremity—the hound trained to the chase with savage barbarity—and the wretched fugitive agonising in the extremity of distress.

But there is still a greater mischief, which often attends these riotous amusements. When the squire hunts with his neighbours, he introduces no more corruption into the parish than he found. But I have sometimes known annual hunts established in sporting countries, which

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At his foot  
The spaniel dying for some venial fault,  
Under dissection of the knotted scourge.

COWPER.

draw together hundreds of profligate people from different parts, who call themselves *gentlemen*, but are really *pests* of the neighbourhood, to which they resort; introducing new vices into the villages, and every kind of debauchery. Their servants, who are commonly of the same stamp, spread the corruption among the peasants and servant-girls, which their masters spread among the farmers' sons and daughters.—The clergyman, who mixes in such scenes, is far out of sight of the bare decency of his profession.

— But pray, Sir, said I, may not some little plea be offered in favor of hunting? Is it not a manly exercise? Does it not furnish our tables with food; and rid the country of noxious animals?

I beseech you, said the Dean, do not call in argument to defend a pastime which has no alliance with reason. Call it a wild passion—a brutal propensity—or any thing that indicates its nature. But to give it any connexion with reason, is making a union between black and white.—But it is *manly*, forsooth, to hunt. *Manliness*, I should suppose, implies some mode of action that *becomes a man*. Hunting might formerly, for aught I know, have been a manly exercise, when the country was overrun with boars and wolves, and it was a *public service* to extirpate them. But to honor with the name of *manliness* the cruel practice of pursuing timid animals to put them to death merely for *amusement*, is, in my opinion, perverting the meaning of words.

There are many ways surely of using manly exercise, at least as healthful—and far more innocent, and less expensive and dangerous, than galloping over hedges, gates, and ditches. If the *manliness* of the action lie in the risk you run of breaking your neck, for no end, it would still be greater manliness to jump down a precipice.—The fox-hunter, I doubt not, would ridicule the man, who runs about with a hand-net hunting a butterfly: but I protest, I see not for what reason. The exercise of the butterfly-hunter is as good; and the pleasure of the chase is, to him at least, equal.—But you allege, that hunting supplies the table with food. I dare say, Sir Roger's game-keeper will tell you, he could supply it better in many other ways. I have certainly no

objection to take the lives of animals for food ; and grant, that if they were suffered to multiply, they would become noxious. What I mean is, that I cannot allow turning the *destruction* of them into an *amusement*—and least of all into a *clerical amusement*.—I knew a gentleman, who took great delight in knocking down an ox ; which he performed with much dexterity : and it was his common amusement to go among the butchers on a slaughtering-day, and give two or three of them a shilling a-piece, to let him be their substitute in that operation. You call such a man a brute : and he surely was one. But you would find it difficult to show, that the circumstance of riding on a horse, and bawling after a

pack of dogs, makes the amusement less brutal.

Surely, said I, Sir, there is a difference between the pleasure of a pursuit ; and a pleasure, which consists merely in the act of inflicting death ?

Why, yes, answered the Dean, there is a difference ; but I know not on which side of it the advantage lies. If hunting be a more *genteel* species of butchery, it is certainly a more *cruel* one. The ox receives its death by an instant stroke ; whereas the hare is first thrown into convulsions of terror, for four or five hours together ; and then seized, in the midst of its agony, and torn piece-meal by a pack of ra-

venous blood-hounds.\*—As to your last argument, that hunting rids the country of noxious animals, I apprehend you are mistaken in the fact. I rather think it tends to replenish the country with them. As one instance at least I can testify, that I offended a whole club of sporting neighbours in a manner, that was hardly ever to be gotten over, by giving a man half-a-crown for killing a fox, which had thinned my poultry-yard. And I dare say, there is not a hunting squire in the country, who would not, at any time, give up a dozen of his tenant's lambs, to save half

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\* ————— Detested sport,

That owes its pleasure to another's pain !

That feeds upon the sobs and dying shrieks

Of harmless nature —————

COWPER.

the number of foxes' cubs. Nay, I have often known covers of considerable extent left purposely in fields, or perhaps planted merely to decoy foxes into a neighbourhood, by providing a proper shelter for them.—But you have provoked me to say all this by aiming to establish an alliance between hunting and rationality. I intended not to disturb the squire either in his riotous day, or his roaring night. I consider *his* malady as a surgeon does a mortification which has seized the vitals—beyond all hope of recovery. What I mean, is only to admonish the clergyman not to follow his example.

It is but just however to say, that examples to warn him might also be found in our own profession. I remember a clergy-

man in a neighbourhood, where I once lived, who had two benefices ; but he spent little time at either of them, because neither happened to be in a sporting country. The hunting-season he always spent near a squire in the parish next to mine, whose disciplined pack was famous. With this gentleman, and his hounds, he lived on terms of the greatest intimacy. Indeed both the squire and his dogs looked up to him as their ablest leader. Though he was a miserable preacher, he was uncommonly musical in the field ; and could cheer, and animate his sonorous friends with an eloquence beyond the huntsman himself, whose associate he always was, and whose place, on any emergency, he could amply supply. He was much readier at finding a hare, than a text of scripture ; and though he was scarce ac-

quainted with the face of one of his parishioners, he knew exactly the character of every hound in the squire's pack ; and could run over their names with much more readiness, than those of the twelve apostles.\* He had at length the misfortune to break his neck at the end of a fox-chase ; but not till he had first broken the heart of a very amiable woman, who had unhappily connected herself with him.

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\* Oh laugh, or mourn with me, the rueful jest,  
A cassock'd huntsman !—  
He takes the field ; the master of the pack  
Cries, Well done, Saint—and claps him on the  
back.

Is this the path of sanctity ? Is this  
To stand a way-mark in the road to bliss ?

Such a clergyman, said I, is hardly to be paralleled in a century. But in an inferior degree, I fear, there are many of our brethren, who allow themselves great indulgence. I remember a hunting-clergyman, who received a very proper rebuke from one of his brethren ; and which I have reason to believe was of service to him as long as he lived. He had been lamenting his unfortunate lot, in being stationed in a country, where there was no hunting. The other looking him full in the face, said with great gravity of countenance, and in a deliberate tone of voice ; “ At the great day of accounts, the question will not be, *where* have you lived ; but *how* have you lived ?”—All this however is carrying amusement to excess. But suppose, Sir, when you are

riding out, you happen to hear the hounds, is there any harm merely in taking a little exercise with them, if you do not join in the riot of the chase?

I hate, said the Dean, to see a man do any thing by halves. Is it right, or is it wrong? If it be right, do it boldly. If it be wrong, turn your horse another way, and take your exercise in a contrary direction. Never go to the edge of a precipice. You can hardly help going a little farther than you intended. I remember hearing a story of a clergyman, who was not remarkable for neglecting, at least the outward part of his duty; but once unhappily forgot it through his love for hunting. He was eagerly engaged in a fox-chase, when the fox *took to earth*, as

they call it: on which he cried out, "Gentlemen, I must leave you: This puts me in mind, that I have a corpse to bury at four o'clock this evening; and I fear I shall be an hour too late."---Besides, continued the Dean, you cannot well avoid, in this field of riot, at least if you are often seen in it, making an acquaintance with several, to whom, for your character's sake, you would not wish to be known.—But indeed, as I observed, to mix, in any degree, in these scenes of cruelty, and riotous exultation, is unbecoming the clerical profession.—Farther still, (to close my argument with scripture) I should wish you to consider, that as many good people, as well as I, disapprove a clergyman's mixing in these riotous amusements, so of course it will give

offence to all these good people. No man therefore, who has the honour of his profession at heart, would give offence, where the matter in question is of so little consequence as a mere amusement. Let him consider how strict St. Paul was in matters of this kind. St. Paul's example is certainly not very fashionable; but with a clergyman, I should hope it might have some weight. He gives us many hints, which come home to the point we are now discussing. Hunting was out of the question. He would not certainly have permitted Timothy, or Titus to hunt, if they had been so disposed. But he forbids us to give offence in matters, that are of much more concern, than mere amusement. *If meat, says he, make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh,*

*while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.*

I told the good Dean he had silenced me. I was afraid my love for the diversion had been founded rather on inclination than argument. But nobody again, I hoped, should ever *take offence* at my following a pack of hounds.—But pray, said I, Sir, do you allow shooting? It is a much less riotous amusement; nay, it may even be a solitary one.

To speak plainly, replied the Dean, I cordially allow no *amusement* to a clergyman that has any thing to do with *shedding blood*.—Besides, I think a peculiar cruelty attends this diversion. You may wound, and maim, as well as kill. My

*heart*, I am sure, would be strongly affected—indeed, even my *conscience*—if I should make a poor animal miserable all the days of its life, for the sake of giving myself a momentary amusement.—It was but the last autumn, when riding down a lane, I saw two poor miserable partridges —both bleeding, and one trailing a shattered leg after it—fluttering and running before me. Poor wretches, said I, I wish the person, who put you into this miserable situation, may never feel the distress he has occasioned ! I then ordered my servant to dismount, and run after them. The lame one he caught ; the other crawled into a hedge, where it probably lingered out its miserable life a few days longer.

But the expert marksman, I told the Dean, never shoots among a covey, but takes his aim at a single bird.

And are all shooters, said he, *expert marksmen*? And does the expert marksman himself never maim the bird he aims at, or the bird that is near it? Often, I have no doubt, he maims both.—To repel the attack of a bird, or beast of prey, I have certainly no objection; nor to take the life of an animal for food; though I should not wish to make a clergyman the butcher, whether an ox or a partridge is to be slaughtered. But to take the life of an animal, except in one or the other of these cases, I hold to be absolutely immoral. And I think it is no better to run the risk of maiming it, and making it mi-

serable for life. The most humane way therefore is to take birds with a net, which allows you to discharge such as you wish, and put to a speedy death those you take for food.

But to take birds in a net, said I, Sir, is not at all in the spirit of sportsmen.— Besides, there are some species of game, as pheasants particularly, which cannot be taken in nets.

Do not tell me, replied the Dean, of the *spirit of sportsmen*. Though the ties of humanity, no doubt, equally bind them; yet to such hopeless hearers I should no more attempt to preach, than I should to their spaniels.—Nor do I pretend to know, what kind of game may be

## *Amusements of Clergymen.*

taken in one way, and what in another : though I have no doubt, but my friend Robert\* could inform me, how pheasants might be taken without shooting them. But what I labour at chiefly is to convince such sober-minded clergymen, as I conceive you to be, that every species of bloody and cruel amusement is unsuitable to the genius and temper of a Christian divine ; and enters more by habit into a character, than is commonly supposed. It is under the idea of tainting a character with professional habits, that the butcher is prohibited from serving on a jury.

For myself, Sir, I replied, I am only ashamed, that from the dictates of my own reason I have not sooner acknowledged

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\* Sir Roger's game-keeper.

the truths you set before me. I always had my doubts: but not supposing amusements of this kind to be *sinful*, and not conceiving them to be *improper*, from the eagerness with which numbers of my elder brethren pursue them, I stifled my own suggestions. But in my present sentiments I believe I shall never fire a gun again for my diversion, at any kind of game.

To assist your good resolutions, said the Dean, I can suggest two or three other considerations, which are worth the attention of a clergyman. He can scarce be settled in any place, in which he will not find the squire of his parish attached violently to his game; and jealous of every man, who interferes with

him in this great point. He is especially jealous of the clergyman, whom he considers as an interloper. I have known many clergymen get into silly squabbles on this score ; and by making themselves obnoxious to the squire, render themselves much less able to be of service in their parishes. On many occasions the squire's countenance may be of great use to the clergyman in managing his parochial affairs : and it is highly imprudent to lose his assistance for a trifle.

I once, said I, experienced this inconvenience myself. But I had the discretion, when I found I had raised a jealousy, immediately to desist. At present, I have free permission from Sir Roger, and two or three other gentlemen of the

country, to range their domains when I please: So that I lay down my arms in the plenitude of my power.

I should wish still farther to suggest to you, continued the Dean, that if any mischance, in these violent exercises, should happen to a clergyman, it tells much worse, than when it happens to another person. How oddly would it sound, if the parish were told, on a Sunday there could be no service, because the parson had put out his shoulder, the day before, by a fall at a fox-chase? If a clergyman lose a hand, or an eye in shooting, as is sometimes the case, I have generally found the commiseration of people, mixed with a certain degree of contempt. If he had been about his business, they

would say, it would not have happened.—The commission also of an accidental mischief, in these unclerical amusements, will always be more distressing, at least it ought, to a clergyman than to a layman.— Poor Archbishop Abbot was a melancholy instance. He was exemplary in many points, but unhappily indulged himself in the amusement of shooting ; and as he was taking this exercise in a park belonging to Lord Zouch in Hampshire, he had the misfortune to shoot one of the keepers. After this event, he never recovered his cheerfulness ; and party running high, it gave his enemies a great handle against him. It was brought as a question, whether he could ever again officiate as an archbishop. After a long inquiry, it was determined, that he must be degraded, but

that the king might again restore him ; which was accordingly done.—I could point out a prelate of these days,<sup>1</sup> who does his character no service by being a sportsman. Formerly he kept a pack of hounds ; but has had the decency, since he obtained a mitre, to dismiss them. He is still however his own game-keeper ; and is so expert, that he wants no assistance in furnishing his table with every article of game. Archbishop Abbot's misfortune reminds me of a similar accident, of which this prelate had nearly been the occasion. A young lady, who lived near him, was riding quietly along a close lane, when a gun went off, on the other side of the hedge, close to her horse's

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<sup>1</sup> About the beginning of James II.

ear. The beast took fright—started violently aside—and threw her; though providentially she was not hurt. While her servant was following her horse, she walked gently up the lane; and coming to an opening in the hedge, the bishop, in all his shooting accoutrements, presented himself. He made his apology, and hoped she was not hurt. She thanked him for his kind enquiry: but said, she should have been better pleased, if it had been needless.

I told the Dean, I remembered something of the story, about two years ago, in the public prints.

Yes, said the Dean, she was an arch girl, and inserted it in a very ludicrous

manner ; making a laughable contrast between the bishop's sporting attire, and his lawn sleeves, and other episcopal habiliments.

Well, Sir, said I, I hope these examples will prove sufficient cautions to me, though I am sorry to receive them from such exalted characters.—I should wish you however to believe, that I am an enemy to cruelty in all shapes ; and do not remember, that I ever wantonly took the life of the meanest reptile.

We certainly, said the Dean, have no right. When a spider takes possession of my house, or a snail of my garden, I make no scruple to destroy them. They are invaders. But if I meet with either

of them in the fields, I should think myself the invader, if I disturbed them. If a wolf attempt to seize a lamb, which is my property, and under my protection, I think his life should pay the forfeit. But if he can seize an antelope, or any other wild animal, with which I have no concern, I have no authority to interfere. He has the same deed of gift to allege for seizing his prey, which I have for the beef or mutton I buy in the market. And yet I know not, whether I should not put him to death, wherever I found him, as a proscribed villain ; as always acting under at least a tacit declaration of war against me. If I were not well assured he would attack me, when he could, I am persuaded I should never molest him.

—Man regulates his actions towards his

*fellow-men by laws, and customs.* But certainly there are laws also to be observed between man and beast, which are equally coercive, though the injured party has no power of appeal.

I fully accede, said I, Sir, to your code of criminal law between man and beast. It is certainly power, not right, that we appeal to, in wantonly disposing of the lives of animals. And what surprises me the more is, we often see this wanton breach of natural law in men of humanity. An acquaintance of mine, who is as ready as any man to do a good-natured action, will stand whole mornings by the side of a bridge, shooting swallows, as they thread the arch, and flit past him. He is however no clergyman.

Let him be what he will, said the Dean, his profession has been mistaken, and he ought to have been bred a butcher. I can have no conception of the humanity of a man who can find his amusement in destroying the happiness of a number of little, innocent creatures, sporting themselves, during their short summer, in skimming about the air ; and without doing injury of any kind, pursuing only their own little happy excursions, and catching the food which Providence has allotted them.—But I have seen instances enough of this kind of cruelty to remove all surprise. More offence from such despotism I never remember to have taken, than about five or six years ago, in a little voyage I made into the Irish sea. A nephew of mine, the captain of a cruizer,

whom you saw here last summer, was then lying at Milford-haven ; and, being about to take the voyage I have mentioned, was desirous to carry me with him, as I had expressed an inclination to see the wonderful rocky barrier, which nature had formed against the ocean, along many of the coasts of Wales. As we drew near a promontory, where the rocks were lofty, we found them inhabited by thousands of sea-fowl of different kinds, which at that season frequent them. I was greatly amused with seeing the variety of their busy actions, and different modes of flight ; and with hearing the harsh notes of each, when single ; and their varied tones, changed into a sort of wild harmony, by the clangor of all together. One should have thought a colony like this

might have been safe from all annoy. They are useless when dead—and harmless when alive.' We saw, however, as we proceeded, two or three boats anchoring at different distances, in which were certain *savages*—I can call them by no other name—diverting themselves with shooting at these poor birds, as they flew from their nests, or returned to them with food from the sea; destroying not only the parent-birds, but leaving the helpless progeny to clamor in vain for food, and die of hunger. This mode of taking life, for no end, is a species of cruelty which I should wish to brand with the severest name; and I should almost detest a clergyman, who should find his amusement in it.

I must allow, said I, Sir, that what you have said against hunting and shooting hath entirely convinced me of the impropriety of both, as clerical amusements.— You have said nothing, however, against fishing. Do you allow me to suppose this amusement to be a clerical one ? It is silent, quiet, and may be contemplative.

I am afraid, replied the Dean, I shall be thought too rigid if I abridge a clergyman of this amusement. Only I absolutely enjoin him not to impale worms on his hook ; but to fish either with an artificial fly or a dead bait. If he like fishing with a net, I approve it more : but still I cannot bring myself to *recommend*

any *amusement* to him which arises from *destroying life*.

But, said I, Sir, fishing seems to have scriptural authority. Many of the apostles were fishermen; and our Saviour himself bids Peter *cast his hook into the sea*.

— Why yes, answered the Dean; but I doubt whether we get much from these authorities. Fishing, you know, was the occupation of several of the apostles: they fished with nets for a livelihood: and St. Peter, you will remember, did not *cast his hook into the sea* for his *amusement*. However, you find I am not very rigid on this head.—Indeed all I have said about taking the lives of ani-

mals amounts only to this—that we have no right to do it except for food, or to get rid of a nuisance—and that when we are obliged to take life, we should always take it in the easiest manner. All this appears to me so much the dictate of nature and truth, that no man can controvert it *in reason*, whatever he may do *in practice*. But the clergyman is under the still stricter ties of decency and respect to his character.

But have not you, Sir, said I, confined within too strict a limit the power of man over the lives of animals? Are there not other reasons, besides obtaining food, and the removal of a nuisance, which may make the exercise of that power lawful?

May we not take the whale for his oil,  
and the beaver for his fur ?

I allow it, said the Dean. Where the uses of man preponderate, his right over the animal seems just. But perhaps greater liberty may be commonly taken in this matter than my code will allow. If the use be trivial, I reject the claim. I permit you to take the whale for his oil ; but I should not readily grant you leave to destroy the elephant for his tooth.

I told the Dean I saw the difference very plainly. But, said I, Sir, do you allow the philosopher to take life in making his researches into nature ? in examining the wonders of the microscope ; in tracing the circulation of the blood ; in

discovering the properties of air ; and in other things, which tend to advance human knowledge, and often serve some great end of utility ?

This question, said the Dean, is rather more difficult. What promotes human knowledge, or serves any essential purpose of utility, is certainly of more consequence, than the life of an animal : and I give you liberty to take it, when you are sure your motive is good. But I should interdict this privilege to mere curiosity. We may believe, on the credit of others, that the blood circulates ; or that an animal will die in an exhausted receiver.

I then asked the Dean, if he did not

think, on the other hand, that we might carry our tenderness in taking life too far? I have frequently, said I, deserted a path I wished to walk in, because I have found it pre-occupied by a train of ants, which it hurt me to crush. And yet I have sometimes thought my caution unnecessary.

No doubt, replied the Dean, every virtue has its extremes—its *ultra* (as we just observed) as well as its *citra*. I have often seen this tenderness in taking life carried to a ridiculous length, if we can call any thing ridiculous, that is founded on an amiable principle. I knew a humane man, who would not suffer a mouse to be taken in a snap-trap. He allowed it to be taken alive; but he took care to

have it carried to a distance into the fields, and there set at liberty. He would not destroy a spider, though he made no scruple to sweep away its web. My dear Sir, I once said to him, *your tender mercies are cruel.* It would certainly be more merciful to dispatch these poor animals at once, than to make them miserable by turning them adrift, or leaving them to a languishing death by taking from them their means of subsistence. All this, therefore, seems to me absurd. It is making the lives of animals of more consequence than they should be. It is making a man miserable for the sake of a mite. For if we carry this tenderness as far as it will fairly go, we ought neither to eat a plum, nor taste a drop of vinegar. It is not size, which gives value to life. The in-

sect, that forms the blue of a plumb, or that frisks in a drop of vinegar, has certainly the same claim to exist, as a spider or a mouse. And how far life extends, we know not ; so that our tenderness in this respect, if indulged to excess, might be endless. Like Indian Bramins, we should not dare to lie down, or set a foot to the ground, without examining every footprint with microscopical exactness. But as these little swarms of nature interfere thus with all the concerns of men, it is plain, that Providence does not lay much stress on their lives. All, therefore, that seems required, in these cases, is to abstain from wanton injury.—I would not, however, have you always take the measure of a man's virtue by the extraordinary tenderness of his feelings.

I knew a gentleman, so extremely tender towards the lives of animals, that when an earwig crept out of a log of wood, which had been laid on his fire, he forbade any more logs to be taken from that pile, and left it to rot. Yet this very man, with all these nice feelings about him, lived avowedly in a state of adultery. Such tenderness, therefore, may, or may not, be allied. *It is founded merely in nature.* But when *any one* affection of the mind is regulated by a *religious principle*, there is in that mind a *controlling power*, which regulates *other* affections. Thus if we abstain from cruelty on a *religious principle*, we may depend on that *principle* on other occasions. As to these *delicate feelings*, they seldom reach beyond their *immediate object*.—Here

the Dean made a pause, and after a little recollection said, he thought we had now run over all the *riotous*, and *cruel* amusements which he could recollect. As for *cock-fighting*, and *horse-racing*, he added, they are such gambling diversions, that I conceive no clergyman would even be present at the former; nor enter into the spirit of the latter. The race-ground is a wide field, and if he ever enter it for curiosity, he will not only avoid the deep concerns, and commerce of the place, if I may so phrase it; but will also keep entirely aloof from the noise and bustle, and clamor of the scene. A friend of mine lived on the confines of a celebrated race-ground. He was fond of horses, merely as beautiful objects, which he

liked to see in their various motions : and as people are generally well mounted at a race, and much agitated, he used to gratify his curiosity by walking out in an evening, about the time the race was over, and would get behind some hedge, where unseen he had a good view of the company returning from their sport over a fair plain. This was to him the only amusement of a race ; and he would say, he believed he had more pleasure from the sober enjoyment of this moving picture, than any one could feel, who entered into the wild joy and jollity of the scene.

Here our conversation ended at that time. The good Dean complaining, that his feet grew a little troublesome, rang

for his servant to change his posture ;  
and I thinking myself in the way, wished  
him a good night.

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**END OF THE FIRST DIALOGUE.**

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**SECOND DIALOGUE.**

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It was two days before I had an opportunity of renewing my conversation with the good Dean; which I was not sorry for, as it gave me time to put on paper what had already passed. He had divided amusements into three kinds, and we had yet considered only such as were *noisy* and *cruel*. I took the first opportunity to remind him, that he had left me still in possession of such amusements, as he called *trifling* and *seducing*.

I mean not, however, said he, to be more complaisant to you 'on this head,

than I have already been. I am afraid too many of our fashionable amusements will fall under my censure. What do you think, for instance, of cards?

I answered I did indeed suppose he would point one of his first batteries against them.

It was plain then, he told me, that I thought they deserved to be assaulted.

I know not, said I, Sir, whether I thought quite so ill of them. I have always been accustomed to think that, moderately used, they were an innocent amusement, even for a clergyman.

But pray, said the Dean, in examining

the propriety or impropriety, the innocence or guilt, of an action, are you to consider how it affects yourself alone, or how it affects the public in general?

No doubt, I replied, a public-spirited man will consider his actions in reference to the public.

He certainly ought, said the Dean; and this being allowed, do not you consider the present rage for card-playing, through all ranks of people, as a public evil?

I replied, it was, no doubt, an amusement much abused; but the abuse, I thought, lay only at the door of the abuser. Meat and drink were abused—dress was

abused—the Bible itself was abused : but we must have those things notwithstanding.

Aye, there, returned the Dean, you point out the true distinction. You answer yourself. We *must* have the one ; but *need not* have the other. Does it follow, because we *must* have meat and drink, though they are abused, that we *must* necessarily have cards also ?—If then cards be allowed to be a public evil, and we are, at the same time, under *no necessity* to have them, every conscientious man would give up a thing so trifling (as an amusement, at best, is) to avert that evil : and by refraining, he certainly does avert it, as far as his own influence and example reach.

You do not mean, said I, Sir, that cards are in themselves essentially bad.

Why, no, said he. Cards *in themselves* may afford as innocent amusement as any thing else. And yet I know not whether this concession is not too much. I have been used myself to consider amusements under the head of such as are strictly social; and of such as contain in them a principle adverse to society. Many amusements are of the former kind; but cards, and some other games, in which one party must be victorious and the other subdued, encourage a kind of principle somewhat opposite to the social temper: and the many little squabbles, even among friends, at such games, prove the truth of my remark.

However, if they could be played at with such moderation, as occasioned no heart-burning, I should be inclined to wave *this objection*; and consider chiefly the *excess*. It is this, indeed, which creates the great mischief; and the *example* spreads it. If cards are played in the parlour, they descend to the kitchen: and from your parlour, and kitchen, to those of your neighbour, and so on. The lust of card-playing is now become so flagitious that every serious man, I affirm, ought to withdraw his own example from so general and pernicious a practice. The clergyman, in particular, should dread to sanction what has certainly so bad an effect on the manners of the people.

But, said I, Sir, my example is of so

little weight, that it cannot make things either better or worse.

There is not, replied the Dean, with some warmth, in the whole magazine of false reasoning, a more destructive mode of it than this. I will not set a good example, because I know another will not follow it. So nobody will set a good example. We have better rules surely, to direct us, than the practice of other people. When a man thus puts his own practice and example into the hands of others, and depends upon his neighbour's conduct to regulate his own, what reformation can we expect ? If we are right, under such circumstances, it is by chance. Every man's example has its influence,

more or less, which he should endeavour, for the sake of good order, to make as instructive as he can, without troubling himself with the example of others. In families, where cards are never played at in the parlour, I dare take upon me to say they are rarely played at in the kitchen: except perhaps where servants, who have already learned their lesson in card-playing families, are introduced.—And if the obligation to avoid setting a bad example, in this instance, be general, it binds the ecclesiastic with double force. He should certainly be the *salt of the earth*; and endeavour to keep every thing, as far as he can, from corruption. Consider what a change even that might effect. There are perhaps twenty or thirty thousand ecclesiastics of different denomina-

tions, scattered about the various parts of England. If each of these influence a dozen, which (including their own families) is no extraordinary calculation, consider what a party would be gained over. Each of these again, we may suppose, might have some influence; and if we may adopt our Saviour's allusion, we might hope to see it work like leaven through the whole mass. At least, we might hope to see cards confined within the gloomy walls of gaming-houses and night-cellars.

But I should think, said I, Sir, we should *begin* our reformation at these places. If we could get rid of gaming-houses and night-cellars which the high and low vulgar frequent, cards might

perhaps be left to us sober people as an innocent amusement.

' Not so entirely, my good friend,' answered the Dean. ' It is not only when cards are carried to this pernicious height, that I except against them. Indeed, when a man has taken his degrees at a gaming-table, I have done with him. He is beyond receiving instruction from me. I must therefore inform you, that I do not confine the gaming-table to what is called so (as they say) *κατ' ξοχήν*. I rank under that head all those scenes of profligacy, scattered, not only through the metropolis, but through every part of the country, where high stakes are pledged, and well-dressed people meet, not so much with a view of amusement, as with a pur-

pose to pillage one another.—These however are only the *excesses* of card-playing ; but for various other reasons it should be discouraged. In the best light, I think, cards afford only a frivolous, and seducing amusement ; especially to a clergyman. They often lead him into more expense, still short of what may be called *gaming*, than may be prudent for him to incur. Once engaged in the habit of playing, or listed, if I may so phrase it, into the corps of card-players, he cannot sometimes avoid venturing higher stakes than he could wish.—But suppose he keep the scales of loss and gain pretty even, (as I have sometimes heard the moderate card-player boast) what shall we say for the expense of time? Here comes in a very seducing part.

Evening after evening is lost. The afternoon is often added. Habits are formed. Play and comfort are connected; and the day ends in joyless vacancy, that does not conclude with cards.— Besides, you give yourself into the hands of others. It is unsocial to break up a party. You are not therefore master of yourself.—Then again, consider, you cannot choose your company. You are a known card-player; you cannot stand out, when a hand is wanted, and must often consort with those you disesteem.—Above all, young people should consider, how easily, where amusements are concerned, the mind glides into habits of indulgence. In these journeys of pleasure, step follows step mechanically. I knew a young lady thus debauched

into a card-player, though she was once among the most amiable of her sex—domestic—ingenious—fond of books—full of resources, and never at a loss for the employment of her time. Family amusements were all the pleasures she sought. Her father and mother were excellent people; and brought her up, an only daughter, in, what I may justly call, the cheerful restraints of religion. But during a short visit at a relation's, to which her father reluctantly consented, she unhappily got a taste for card-playing; and, when she returned home, did not much enjoy those innocent domestic circles, in which, before, she had given and received so much pleasure. In short, she had lost her heart to this vile amusement. Soon afterwards she married a young

gentleman of fortune—a sober, virtuous, and modest young man, but of talents very inferior to those of his wife. With discretion she might have modelled her family as she had pleased ; and had an excellent model before her, in her father's : but she chose rather to corrupt her husband, and turn his mansion into a gaming-house.—I mention this example as one among a hundred I have seen in my life, to shew the rapid progress of pleasurable habits, and those of cards perhaps beyond all others ; to which I think particularly belongs that excellent adage, *Principiis obsta.*

But since, said I, Sir, we are often obliged to consort with those whom we disesteem, or with those whose minds

are too unfurnished to bear a part in conversation, is it not useful, and often necessary, to introduce something that removes, for the time at least, all disgusts —something that may level those who have not sense, with those who have; and enable them to pass their time together in mutual civility, without labouring to support a conversation, which most probably more than half of them are utterly unable to support?

This is the first time, said the Dean smiling, I ever heard cards mentioned as a bond of benevolence: as the cause of ill-humour, and dissension, I have often heard them taxed. But I suppose you do not hold the argument seriously. You cannot imagine cards to be more effec-

tual to this end, than even those modes of general civility, which commonly reign among polite people ; and check, during the intercourse, all appearance of such little hostilities as may rankle within. At least you must allow, that card-playing is not quite a clerical mode of inculcating benevolence.—And as to your solicitude to lower the man of wit and sense to a level with his neighbours, and bring conversation to an equilibrium, I think it ill-judged. If the man of sense have any good-nature in his composition, he will not be much hurt at bestowing on his weaker neighbour a pittance of his own information and wisdom. At least, it is not well done in you to furnish him with an apology to withhold it. How is the poor man to improve, if on his coming

into company, an immediate stop is put to all conversation by calling for cards? — However, I consider this argument only as a shuffle. Any conversation is surely better than the dull monotony of a card-table. He who can bear the conversation of a card-player, may bear any thing. For myself, I protest I should make better company of a parrot.

I cannot, said I, truly say much for the conversation of a card-table, except that it is innocent, and may keep conversation from taking a worse turn.

“Why, yes, said the Dean, and so it would, if you should clap a gag into every body’s mouth, when he went into company. At the same time I should

lay but little stress either on one expedient or the other. A short *restraint* affords no *amendment*. Bring the axe to the root of the tree—correct the heart—and you do something. But till that be done, the propensity to scandal may be *checked*, but will find its opportunity to *break out*, whether you play at cards or not. Perhaps, like fermenting liquor, it may burst out with more violence from having been confined.

But perhaps, said I, Sir, it may be worth consideration, that if people do not employ their vacant time on cards, they may do worse.

I know not what they can do worse, answered the Dean, if you respect their

amusements only. And if you think cards will keep a young fellow from the stews or a debauch, when he is inclined to either, I fear you attribute much more to them than they deserve. If a man be fond of two games, both are amusements; and so far as there is a similitude between them, the love of one may perhaps overpower an attachment to the other. But when a man is fond of a *game*, and addicted to a *vice*, as there is no similitude between the objects, you have no more ground for expecting the former will drive out the latter, than for supposing a man's dancing a minuet should prevent his admiring a picture.

“ You drive me,” said I, Sir, “ out of all my strong holds: but you must give me

leave to make one observation more. I have heard sickly people speak of cards as a great relief in pain ; when the mind is incapable of any other attention. And if exciting this frivolous attention will draw it from attending to its malady, cards, I think, are an opium, and may often be called a blessing.

I have certainly no objection, replied the Dean, to their being used medicinally. But then I should wish to have them sold only at the apothecary's shop, and the doctor to prescribe the use of them. I should fear, if the patient prescribed for himself, he may be apt to take too large a dose, as he often does of laudanum, and other anodyne drugs. I once knew an old lady, who had lost the use

of her speech, and of both her hands, by two or three paralytic strokes; and every evening took the remedy you have been prescribing. She was a lady of large fortune—gave good suppers—and had generally a number of humble friends about her, one of whom always, after supper, dealt, sorted, and held her cards, and pointing to this, or that, the old lady nodded at the card she wished to have her friend play. But it sometimes happened, that the paralytic shake of the head was mistaken for the nod of approbation, and unfortunately a wrong card was played; which threw the old lady (whose whole heart was in the remedy she was taking) into such violent fits of passion, that people thought she received

more injury from these irritations than benefit from the prescription.

I fear, said I, Sir, from all this ridicule, that you thought what I advanced rather impertinent.

My ridicule, replied the Dean, was not surely directed at you ; but at those poor, pitiable objects, who cannot, even at the close of life, be happy without their cards. I have heard of many such ; and have known some. At a time when serious thoughts and meditation are the most becoming, it is pitiable, in the last degree, to see the dregs of life running off in so wretched a manner. If there is any thing in human nature, which unites contempt and commiseration, said a

friend of mine (coming from a sight of this kind) it is the spectacle of a man going down to the grave with a pack of cards in his hand!

Indeed, said I, Sir, these frightful examples are of themselves sufficient warnings.—But I have done. I give up my cause. I was willing to say what I could for an amusement, in which I fear I have had too great an interest. But I hope, Sir, I shall not be the worse either for your ridicule, or your instruction.—After all however it must be confessed, that we young clergymen have a difficult part to act. The prevalence of custom is a vehement tide, which we find it very hard to stem.

I should therefore, said the Dean, wish you to keep out of it; which every man may, if he please. Be resolute at first in resisting importunity, and importunity will presently cease. You will soon be considered as one who has a will of his own.—The clergy, I think, may be divided into two great bodies. One class are such as enter into the ministry only to make their fortunes. These are a kind of amphibious animals. I cannot call them clergymen. They are traders in ecclesiastical goods. With them my arguments have nothing to do. They have no scruples ; and will comply of course with every thing that will recommend them to the world.—In the other class are many, no doubt, who have the end and honor of their profession at heart;

and wish only to be convinced of the propriety, or impropriety of a thing, to do it or leave it undone. But there are numbers, I fear, in this class, well-meaning, on the whole, and serious men, who are yet ready to make the customs of the world an apology for a variety of improper practices ; and slide into a number of corrupt habits, without considering that to oppose the seducing customs of the world is the very essence of a state of trial ; and that it is the very business of a good pastor to set up his own example as a way-mark against them.

To all this I fully assented.

Aye, Mr. Frampton, continued the Dean, with much earnestness in his man-

ner, these are serious truths. The customs of the world put a gloss upon many improper things—among which I reckon cards; and mislead numbers, who are glad perhaps to misinterpret the apostle, and tell you, that if they do them not, *they must altogether go out of the world.* But whatever liberties the layman takes, (and yet I know not what gives him any exclusive liberty) the clergyman ought to be particularly guarded against the indulgence of any amusement, which is fraught with so much mischief, both public and private; which so easily gains ground by the force of habit; and in the defence of which, you see, so little can be said. Many bad habits subside in age. Nature cannot hold out. But here is a mischievous propensity, which cleaves

often to our very last sand. It is possible I may yet live to see people so barefaced, as to make no distinction of days, and play at cards on Sundays. It is practised, I am informed, in France, from which we derive too many of our fashions.

I told the Dean, that, as I believed I was better acquainted with the history of card-playing than he was, I was afraid that vile practice, though not frequent, had gotten at least some footing among us. One instance I knew. I had, not long ago, the honor to be admitted, in a dearth of better company, to the card-table of a lady of fashion. Soon after I found she played at cards on Sundays ; when fearing lest I should be involved in the imputation of that practice, I never

would touch another card at her house. On her calling me to account for deserting my post, I plainly told her the reason. This led to a short debate. She said, after the duties of the day were over (for she was a constant church-woman) she thought a little recreation in the evening was very allowable. I talked of the great impropriety at least of *breaking down fences*, and laying the practice open to the common people, even though she would not allow any profanation of the day. She thought the fault lay in the cattle, that *went through the breach*. At length however she allowed that playing at *cards on a Sunday* was a very improper practice to get *among the lower people*—and farther, that, when *carried to the height of gaming*, it was a very impro-

per Sunday-amusement to *any one*. I begged she would suffer me to show her, merely on *these two concessions of her own*, the mischief of playing at cards *at all* on a Sunday; and that she might see it in the stronger light, I offered to put my arguments on paper. But I could never obtain leave. She always stopped my mouth with saying, she had made up her mind, and wished to hear no more on the subject.

I honor you, said the Dean, as I should every young clergyman, who could make so proper a stand against a vicious fashion.—And now, in return for your story, in which you have given me an instance of some *duplicity*, I will contrast it with one of genuine *simplicity*. A friend

of mine had a curate recommended from Cambridge, an excellent young man, who had never been in a scrape during the whole time he had been at the university. He was addicted to no improper amusement ; and cards in particular he disliked. It happened, however, on some singular occasion (I believe on that of a young lady's coming of age) he was invited, among several other young folks, to spend an evening where cards made a part of the entertainment. He stood out strenuously, as wholly ignorant of every game. At last some *general game*<sup>1</sup> (I know not

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<sup>1</sup> We have among us at present a kind of game, which is called a *round game*, from the company's sitting *round* a table. The Dean probably alludes to some such game as this, which might be in use in his time.

what they call it) being proposed, and some of the company (as corruptors are always at hand) instructing him in what he could not but feel he had powers of mind to comprehend, he was drawn in, and sat down, though little attentive to the business in which he was engaged. At the end of the game, when the accounts of profit and loss were settled, his companions gave him four shillings, to his great surprise, for certain little ivory fish, which he had received in the course of the game. The next morning, when he told the story, he said it was a fortunate thing that he had been successful ; for if he had lost four shillings, instead of winning them, he should certainly have gone off without paying his debt ; as he had not the least conception that the ivory

fish he had received, represented anything but themselves.

The good Dean having thus dispatched the card-table, led me next to the play-house. What a noble institution, said he, have we here, if it were properly regulated! I know of nothing that is better calculated for moral instruction—nothing that holds the glass more forcibly to the follies and vices of mankind. I would have it go hand-in-hand with the pulpit. It has nothing indeed to do with scripture and Christian doctrines. The *pageants*, as, I think, they were called, of the last century, used to represent scripture-stories, which were very improperly introduced, and much better handled in the pulpit. But it is impossible for the

pulpit to represent vice and folly in so strong a light as the stage. One addresses our reason, the other our imagination ; and we know which receives commonly the more forcible impression. There should always, however, be a little dash of the *caricature* to give a zest to *character*. But nature and probability should be strictly observed. I remember—I believe it is now thirty years ago—seeing a play acted (I forget its title) in which an old fellow is represented dallying with a coquettish girl. It was an admirable picture from nature. The sprightly actions of youth imitated by the ridiculous gestures of age, struck my memory so forcibly, that the picture is yet as fresh, as if it had been painted yesterday.—As *moral representations*, I cannot say, I

think Shakspeare's plays are models. There is a fund of nature in them—vast invention—and a variety of passions admirably coloured. I wish I could forget the loose fancy which wantons through most of them, and is extremely disagreeable to a chaste ear. But what I chiefly remark is, that I do not *commonly* find in them (what I should wish to find in *every* play) some virtue or good quality, set in an amiable light; or some vice or folly, set in a detestable one, and made, as it were, the burden of the whole. I call the scenes of Falstaff admirable copies from nature; but I know not what instruction they give. Now I should wish to turn the play-house into a mode of amusing instruction, and to suffer no theatrical performance which did not

eminently conduce to this end. Young men, for instance, are apt to be led away by vicious pleasures ; and, to supply their profligacy, are often carried from one degree of wickedness to another. A play on such a subject<sup>1</sup> might, perhaps, deter many a young man, in the beginning of his career. Or a good effect might be produced by placing some virtue in opposition to its contrary vice ; as *contrasts* generally have more force than *simple exhibitions.*

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<sup>1</sup> There was afterwards a play formed on this very plan, intitled *George Barnwell* ; the moral of which is good, though the execution is far from being faultless.

I asked the Dean if he meant to exclude comedy from his theatre?

By no means, said he: I should rather encourage it more than tragedy, inasmuch as I should have more hope of curing such vices and follies as require the lash, than such as require the gibbet. My stage-authors should deal much in ridicule; which, when well conducted, and not thrown on individuals but cast broadly on vice and folly, I conceive to be an admirable engine. But I should not ridicule a squinting eye—a stammering voice—a provincial dialect—the peculiarities of a profession—or indeed any oddity or deformity that was no strictly immoral.

I am afraid, said I, Sir, you will cut off

much of our modern wit by this severity ; for these oddities are, in general, a great source of it. The broken English of a Frenchman—the blunders of an Irishman—or the broad dialect of a Scotchman, are what our modern theatres are taught to believe very witty. I shall, however, (to speak for one) think myself much obliged to you for ridding the stage of all this trumpery of false wit and humour, and bringing only such ridiculous characters forward, as can *support themselves*, if I may so speak, by their real follies and vices.—But there is one thing which, I fear, will incapacitate the stage from being of much use in the reformation of manners. The scenery, the dresses, the music, and other appendages of the theatre, make the expence so great, that it can

never be brought to a level with the pockets of the multitude.

That is well urged, said the Dean. I thank you for the hint, and will immediately model my dramatic representations in conformity to it.—We have one church for rich and poor. All pay equal homage to one God—all are equally his creatures—and it is fit we should all worship him in one place.—But though we have only one church, there is no necessity to have only one theatre. In my Utopia, therefore, I mean to establish two—one for the higher, the other for the lower orders of the community. In the first, of course, there will be more elegance and more expence; and the drama must be suited to the audience by the

representation of such vices and follies as are found chiefly among the great. The other theatre shall be equally suited to the lower orders. And to enable them the better to partake of the moral amusement provided for them, I mean to abolish all tumbling—dancing—bear-baiting, and every thing else that tends only to encourage *merriment without instruction.*

You have now, said I, Sir, perfectly satisfied me. I shall heartily rejoice in the erection of your two theatres; and it gives me great delight to hear you speak so favourably of the drama. I own, if there is any one amusement which appears to me superior to all others, it is to see a good play well acted.

But hold, said the Dean: you understand, I hope, that I give this commendation only to theatres of my own regulating; not to such as at present exist. With a few exceptions, I think I may describe the drama of the present age,<sup>1</sup> as having nothing less in its view than good morals. Amorous scenes—vicious principles—the most indelicate language—debauched characters, set off in agreeable colours—scoffs thrown out against religion and morals—with light music tending to soften the mind, and make it

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<sup>1</sup> It must be observed, that the drama of that age was exceedingly corrupt. Charles the Second had introduced great licence into the theatre. Bad as the stage still is in this respect, it is much chaster than it was then.

still more susceptible of those vile incentives, that had already been excited, are too much, I fear, the ingredients of our theatrical amusements. And even if the play were good, and tended to give the thoughts any virtuous impression, the light farce, coming after, would throw the whole at once out of the mind. All forces I should recommend to my lower theatre. The style of all its compositions should be somewhat in this way ; but they should all certainly have a moral tendency. The farce, as at present used, is a most absurd excrescence ; and I suppose intended merely to please the vulgar. As there is an upper gallery, the people there must be pleased, as well as those in the boxes. But my two theatres will render this double mode of

representation unnecessary. In short, if the stage were regulated as I could wish it, even clergymen almost might be actors upon it. As it is now managed, they cannot well, I think, be innocent spectators. Tacitus, I remember, somewhere speaking of the modesty of the German ladies, attributes it in a great measure to their not being suffered to attend public diversions.<sup>1</sup> I should wish only to make one improvement on this German fashion, which is, neither to permit gentlemen nor ladies to attend them, till they are better regulated. The historian might have reference to the public amusements

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<sup>1</sup> The words of the original are, *Nullis spectaculorum illecebris; nullis convitiorum irritationibus corrupte.*

of *this own* country, with which he thought it happy the German ladies had no opportunities of being corrupted. Whatever his precise meaning was, it shows his general opinion of such amusements: and I suppose you will allow Tacitus, though not an apostle, to be a very good judge of men and manners.— Besides, added the Dean, the very profession of a player is rendered so disreputable, that nobody ought to encourage it. Take the matter home with you. Would you wish either your son or daughter to seek a livelihood on the stage? If not, do you think it shows much moral rectitude to encourage in other people's children, what, on virtuous principles, you would shudder at in your own?

I told the Dean I durst not take upon me to answer his invective, either against the stage or its professors. I feared there was more truth in what he had said than I wished to find. A clergyman, I observed, must often be in the way of hearing and seeing improprieties which he cannot avoid. But I allowed it certainly to be a different case, when he went *voluntarily* into the way of these things.—I then asked the Dean what he thought of dancing-assemblies and cheerful meetings of other kinds ?

As they are at present managed, said the Dean, so far as I am acquainted with them, I should hardly allow a clergyman to attend any of them. Put them under

my regulation and he may attend them all.

For the sake of truth, I replied, I must say, that I have attended the assemblies at our county-town, not constantly, indeed, but very frequently, and I do not remember ever seeing (except perhaps once or twice) what the most exact person would call the least breach of decorum or good manners.

I know not, said the Dean, what you precisely mean by the least breach of decorum; but before I should give my sanction to the assemblies at your county-town I should wish to ask a few questions. Is all company, that are well dressed, promiscuously admitted?—or admitted on

the introduction of nobody can tell who?—Is there no vying in dress, and ornament, and fashion?—Are no card-tables introduced?—Are suppers and drinking, and late hours excluded?—While you are dancing, or carding, or drinking, above stairs, is any care taken of your poor servants below?—Are they left to saunter about inn-yards and tap-houses, to get into bad company—or, not knowing what to do with themselves, to debauch one another? Unless you can answer me rationally, on all these heads, I shall never suffer any clergyman, over whom I have influence, to attend any of these meetings. It may be difficult, perhaps, to prevent the layman from filling the heads of his sons and daughters with dress, and vanity, and folly, and intrigue, and all the imperti-

nence that attends such promiscuous, ill-regulated assemblies—we must leave him, if he please, to set them an example himself, and go before them in all these scenes of dissipation—we must leave him also, to take no more care of the morals of his servants than if they were his cattle, and to pay no attention to the difficulties into which he leads them. If he will run into these *excesses*, (I have no better word in my dictionary to explain my meaning) I cannot prevent it : but certainly I should wish the clergyman to be very cautious how he gives any encouragement to such assemblies by his example. The world may laugh at him ; but he must learn to bear the ridicule of the world, and I hope in return he will meet approbation elsewhere.

But, said I, Sir, I have often heard, that prudent fathers and mothers consider these meetings as places where their daughters are seen to most advantage.

Aye, replied the Dean, I have lately heard that subject discussed in all its folly by one of these prudent mothers, to whom I was weak enough to give my advice on this head, for the sake of an amiable god-daughter of mine. I hate the idea of carrying young women, like colts, to a fair. It is indelicate: it is below their dignity. They should not seek, but be sought after. Few happy marriages, I believe, are founded on these hasty impressions. I shall not, however, say more on this point, as I am not instructing the world at large, but only giving ad-

vice to my brethren of the clergy. Let the beau suit himself with a belle, and choose a wife from the made-up young ladies, who are taught to say smart things and shine at assemblies, and whose heads are fuller of fashions than of such knowledge as most becomes them. But when the clergyman thinks it prudent to change his condition, let him look for a wife in some domestic family, and endeavour to choose one, whom he hears sober people commend for her private virtues. And if she happen to be known in any polite circle, and dignified by the name of a *lifeless, inanimate thing*, he has still the better chance for happiness.

As I was always fond of dancing, I did not care to let the argument wholly drop ;

and told the Dean I hoped he had no dislike to dancing in *itself*; but only when it was improperly circumstanced. It appeared to me a very innocent winter-evening amusement.

It appears so to me, said the Dean. I have already told you, that if you will suffer me to regulate your dancings, and other evening-meetings, I will freely indulge you in them. Summon an assembly when you please, at some *private* house. *Public* houses always lead to promiscuous company and intemperance. Let the meeting consist of well-educated and well-disposed young people of both sexes; and when the music strikes up, and the dance begins, send for me, and I will hobble away, as fast as my gouty feet will

allow, and if I may be permitted quietly to occupy a corner of the room in an elbow-chair, I shall enjoy the scene as much as any of you. To see youth and innocence made happy amidst such amusements as are suitable to them, always gives a new joy to my philanthropy; which is as suddenly injured, when I see them entangled in pleasures which I cannot but look upon as secret snares for their innocence.—And yet I cannot say I should wish to see a clergyman, except perhaps a very young one, more than a spectator of these amusements. To see him, to-day sailing about in a minuet step, and to-morrow preaching in a pulpit, might make a contrast perhaps too strong for some of his hearers. I do not, however, wish to determine precisely. The amuse-

ment is certainly innocent.—With regard to the other meetings you mention, if you put them under the same rational restraint, I have no objection to any of them. I should be pleased to meet a set of virtuous, well-bred young men, or a mixed company, either at dinner or supper; and if their chief end were either conversation or innocent amusement, I should do the best in my power to amuse and enliven them. Nor should I expect them all to be men of agreeable manners, ingenuity, and information. I should only indulge the hope of their having the same dislike that I had, to transgress the rules of decency and propriety.—But as for clubs met together on set purpose to be joyous—to drink and to rattle—to sing songs and catches—to roar and stagger,

as the evening gets late, I hold them in abhorrence. No clergyman<sup>1</sup> should ever join in such orgies; and I should think very meanly of him if he should frequent a company that had the least tendency to that riotous mirth which produces these improprieties of behaviour.

You seemed to mention, said I, Sir, with

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<sup>1</sup> Johnson and his friend Beauclerk were in company with several clergymen who thought they should appear to advantage by assuming the lax jollity of men of the world. Johnson, who, they expected, would be entertained, sat grave and silent for some time. At last, turning to Beauclerk, he said, by no means in a whisper, “The merriment of these parsons is mighty offensive.”

a mark of disapprobation, songs and catches. Do you see any thing particularly mischievous in them?

By no means, replied the Dean, when they are not found in bad company; and when the words are such as neither countenance vice nor violate decorum. If the select assembly we just left dancing, choose to amuse themselves after their dance, or after supper, with singing, I should not only approve it, but beg leave to listen to them. Even the clergyman I will allow to sing in such an assembly; though I should warmly reprove him if he should sing for the entertainment of a mixed company, or at a public meeting. If I should not be thought precise or puritanical, I should, now and

then, recommend a psalm-tune especially on a Sunday evening. We have several psalm-tunes which are very fine ; and when sung in parts, by sweet female voices, are, in my ear, more harmonious than any other species of music ; and in the language of our great, but unfashionable poet,<sup>1</sup>

Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to heaven.

At the same time, I cannot say I am a friend to instrumental music on a Sunday evening ; from no objection to the thing itself, (though, indeed, I think harmonious voices sweeter when unaccompanied) but I should fear its being misconstrued by un-

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<sup>1</sup> At that day Milton, on the account of his political principles, was not in general esteem.

distinguishing people, to whom we should always be careful not to give offence. Psalms are sung in churches, and can lead into no mistake; but fiddles, and flutes, and harpsichords, are merry instruments, and, in some people's opinion, can never be accommodated to purposes of devotion.' As to *catches*, I know little of them: but from what I do know

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' Occiduus is a pastor of renown.

When he has prayed, and preached the sabbath down,

With wire and catgut he concludes the day,  
Quay'ring and semiquav'ring thought away  
The full concerto swells upon your ear;  
All elbows shake.—

Will not the sickliest sheep of every flock  
Resort to this example?—

If apostolic gravity be free  
To play the fool on Sundays, why not we?

they make no attempt either at sense or sentiment. The harmony may be good ; and if the words, though senseless, have no ill meaning, I shall not reprobate though I cannot commend them.

Having dispatched, said the Dean, all our *riotous* and *cruel* amusements, and likewise such as are *trifling* and *seducing*, (though they often, as in some instances just observed, intermingle with each other) I should now introduce you to such amusements as I think proper for a

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If he the tinkling harpsichord regards  
As inoffensive, what offence in cards ?  
Strike up the fiddles, let us all be gay;  
Laymen have leave to dance, if parsons play.

COWPER.

clergyman : but as the evening grows late we will take an earlier hour, if you please, to-morrow, to discuss them.

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**END OF THE SECOND DIALOGUE.**

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## THIRD DIALOGUE.

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THE next day was Sunday, when I happened to be wholly engaged. But on Monday I waited on the good Dean soon after dinner.

I am impatient, said I, Sir, to have another conversation with you. You have taken from me my gun and my dog. You have prohibited my playing at cards, and have refused me leave to go to an assembly, or to meet my friend at a tavern ; and I cannot but be solicitous to know what amusement you will at length allow me.

But are not you, replied the Dean, rather unreasonable? I have indeed taken your gun. But as to your dog, you may keep him, if you please, for a companion. I have no objection. Have I not at least *connived* also at your fishing? Have I not introduced you to many agreeable societies? Have I not given you leave to sing and to dance? And does not all this satisfy you? However, I mean still to do more. I wish only to make your amusements—your habits—your company—your dress—and your profession, all agree. By the way, I am not a little solicitous about the dress of a clergyman; which I think a matter of more consequence than the generality of people will, perhaps, allow. I think it an argument of great lightness in a clergy-

man to endeavour, as far as he can, to adopt the lay habit. He shows he has embraced his own profession only for reasons of convenience, and in his heart dislikes its restraints. I should wish to have every clergyman, especially when in full orders, obliged to appear always in a short cassock, under his coat. He could not then so easily adopt improprieties in his dress, and might be more upon his guard also against improprieties in his behaviour. His clerical habit would be a continual call upon him for decorum, as he durst not, in that garb, do many things which, dressed like a layman, he might be tempted to do. Besides, it might tend to keep such young men out of the church, as, when in it, are a disgrace both to it and to themselves. Cloathing was origi-

nally intended for the sake of decency and warmth. In civilized societies it became afterwards of use to distinguish ranks : and if in this instance the distinction were a little more enforced, it would, I am persuaded, have a good effect.

I hope, Sir, said I, that my wardrobe, if it were all produced before you, would give you no offence. Nothing would be found there but what is strictly clerical. Indeed I, myself, have been often highly offended at the improper dress of many of my younger brethren. I wonder not, therefore, at *your* being offended.

So far then, answered the Dean, I may presume upon you as a hopeful disciple; and that, as you are clerical in your dress,

you will be clerical also in your amusements. Now as *exercise*, on which health so much depends, is one great end of amusement, and as the clerical life may in general be called a sedentary one, he who provides amusements for a clergyman should have an especial view to exercise. But though I forbade the clergyman to gallop after hounds I have no objection to his mounting his horse, and riding a dozen miles in a morning, for exercise.

But without some end in view, I observed, few people were fond of a solitary ride.

Solitary ride! exclaimed the Dean. Have you forgotten the philosopher's noble adage, *Nunquam minus solus, quam*

*cum solus?* I should allow a man brought up in business to urge such a pretence ; but in a scholar I cannot admit it. The very trot of a horse is friendly to thought. It beats time, as it were, to a mind engaged in deep speculation. An old acquaintance of mine used to find its effect so strong, that he valued his horse for being a little given to stumbling. I know not how far, he would say, I might carry my contemplation, and totally forget myself, if my honest beast did not, now and then, by a false step, jog me out of my reverie, and let me know that I had not yet gotten above a mile or two out of my road.'

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<sup>1</sup> This story was afterwards told of Dr. Young ; not the author of the *Night Thoughts*, but another clergyman of that name, remarkable for simplicity of character and absence of mind.

But every scholar, said I, Sir, has not the art of keeping his thoughts so collected. The trotting of a horse, even without stumbling, may be enough to dissipate his best meditations.

If he cannot think, answered the Dean, in one way let him think in another. If he cannot lay premises and conclusions together, and make a sermon, let him consider some letter he has to write, or some conference with a neighbour to manage. He must be a very thoughtless fellow if he have not some useful topic to engage his thoughts. Or perhaps he may have some friend to call upon. At worst, he may amuse himself with looking at the country around him. It is a pleasure to see how differently the corn

or the grass grows in different parishes, and to mark its progress. Every season furnishes some new and agreeable scene. He sees the woods assume one appearance in the spring—another in summer—a third in autumn—and a fourth in winter. And as nature is never at a stand, he sees a continual variation in her scenes. So that, if he have no resources in himself he may still find them in the beauties of nature.

But, perhaps, I objected, he is not fond of riding ; or he may not be able to keep a horse.

Let him walk, then, said the Dean. I should recommend walking to him, as every way a preferable exercise. Over

the horseman he will enjoy many advantages. He is instantly equipped. He has only to take his hat and stick, and call his dog. Besides, he need not keep the highway, like the horseman. He goes over the stile—he gets into the devious path—he wanders by the side of the river, or through the mead—and if these sequestered scenes do not make him think I know not what can do it.—Besides, he may use as *much* exercise in half the time, which is of consequence to a scholar—and I should suppose as *wholesome* exercise.—But above all things, I should wish him to get a habit of thinking methodically as he walks. It will soon become as easy to think in the fields as at his desk ; and he will enjoy at once the double advantage of study and exercise.

Here again he has an advantage over the horseman. He has his hands at liberty to manage his memorandum-book, and his black-lead pencil, which, with the incumbrances of a whip and a bridle, is more difficult. To think methodically *on horseback* is the work rather of a strong head, which can continue and carry on an argument—digest it in the mind—and remember the several parts and dependencies of it. *On foot*, the memorandum-book eases the head of all this trouble, by fixing the argument as it proceeds: for myself, the exercise of walking with a memorandum-book in my hand hath ever been among the first pleasures of my life. When I was a young man, and could go among my poor neighbours, I had three employments at the same time:—

visiting my parish—studying—and using exercise. I have made, in these excursions, many a sermon. The greatest part of this book<sup>1</sup> was first rudely composed in the fields, and when I came home I always digested what had occurred in my walk—consulted my authorities, and wrote all fair over. And even since I grew old, when it pleases God to allow me the use of my feet, I still continue the same exercise; only instead of being able, as I was then, to take a fatiguing excursion, without paying much attention to roads or weather, I am obliged now to shorten my walk—to rest a little, and divide it into portions—to creep along

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<sup>1</sup> The *Origines Sacræ*, which the Dean had just been correcting.

easy paths—in garden walks, or under sheltering hedges.

Much do I wish, said I, Sir, that you could continue with more ease your useful walks, in which the world hath so much partaken, and will long partake.

—For myself, I shall certainly endeavour to imitate an example which I am convinced is so profitable. I will immediately get a memorandum-book, and hope in time to find more pleasure in bringing home the heads of a sermon than I have often done in bringing home a pheasant or a partridge.—But still, Sir, there are many pious and good clergymen, who may be great blessings to their parishes, and yet were never able to compose a sermon themselves, and cannot, perhaps,

by any means, induce a habit of thinking methodically—What are they to do?

Why they must endeavour, said the Dean, as I advised the horseman in the same circumstances, to find employment for their thoughts as they are able. If they are visiting a poor neighbour, in sickness or distress, they may think what to say on the occasion. The duties of his parish will always be a call to exercise, and engage a worthy clergyman to be frequently abroad, in one shape or other, especially if his parish be extensive.—He may also take a book, and read at intervals, which will always furnish some employment for his thoughts.—I have heard Sir Roger speak of the mode of exercise used by his late friend Dr. Bret.

He would generally, during two hours every day, sally out into the fields, with his spud in his hand, and cut up all the weeds he could meet with. A field of thistles was to him a sporting country : and he used to say, good man ! when he was inclined to boast a little of his benevolent exercise, that he believed he did not save his parishioners less than a dozen pounds every year in weeding.—But if walking, after all, except when some end or parish-duty is in view, cannot be made pleasant to a clergyman, let him seek other exercise. Does he love a garden ? There cannot be a more clerical amusement than the cultivation of it. The flower-garden—the fruit-garden—or the kitchen-garden, may all afford him great amusement, and are perfectly consistent

with his character. I should think it no discredit to a clergyman to have his vines and his fruit-trees better trained by his own hands than those of any professed gardener in the country : and even his pease and beans and cabbages to be in a more flourishing condition.—If he wish for still stronger exercise let him roll his walks, or dig his ground *usque ad sudorem*. This will be of great use to him ; for besides the advantage of it, it will enable him to take as much exercise in a couple of hours as will serve him for the day. It is a wise provision in the statutes of some monastic houses, to oblige their members to employ themselves in manual labour during so many hours in the four-and-twenty. Nothing

can contribute more to give them spirits and rid them of the spleen. I have heard that the founder of the famous abbey of La Trappe, in prescribing this kind of discipline to his convent, used to say, that as labour was originally laid on man as a punishment for sin, we may be assured it is one of the best means of keeping us out of it.

I admire his wisdom, said I, in making the rules of his convent an antidote to the natural indolence of a cloister. And I think our church, in giving the clergyman a glebe, hath had something of this kind in its eye. I suppose you have no objection to his making the culture of it his amusement?

None, replied the Dean, if the selling of his corn and hay do not lead him to bargain among low people at markets. I have no objection to *any* innocent rural employment. For myself, when I lived in the country I had great pleasure in all these things. I used to see my horses and cows foddered ; used to visit them in their pastures, and fed my poultry myself. But there are few circumstances in which I should advise a clergyman to gather his own tithe. It is an odious business.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> When will the good sense of the Legislature appoint a funded Income for the Clergy in lieu of Tithes ? Dreadful is the persecution, deception, and fraud, practised on them in the year 1820.

I asked the Dean, if he had any objection to *botany*, as an inducement to draw us abroad?

Not the least, said he, if it *be* an inducement—to me it would be none, though it is certainly very innocent; and, if I should judge from the numbers who study it, very interesting also. To examine the beauty and construction of plants—their infinite variety and their several uses, I can easily conceive, might furnish much rational amusement. But merely to give them hard names, when they already have easy ones, and to *class them botanically*, which is in fact to class them so that nobody but a botanist can find them out, appears to me something like writing an English grammar in

Hebrew. You explain a thing by making it unintelligible. I must speak however, with caution, on a subject of which I know so little.<sup>1</sup>

I then asked the Dean what he thought of bowls, tennis, and cricket, as clerical amusements?

With regard to bowls, said he, I am a party concerned, and therefore improperly called upon, either as an advocate or an evidence. I always liked a game at bowls, and thought it good exercise in a summer-

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<sup>1</sup> This censure of botany seems to respect Mr. Ray, who was contemporary with Dr. Stillingfleet, and the only botanist of note, I believe, at that time.

evening. It is just exercise enough to give the body a gentle breathing, without being too violent. With regard to tennis and cricket, I must be silent for another reason. I know nothing of either of them. To none of these exercises, however, have I any objection, if the party which joins you in them be well chosen. It is this which makes them innocent or seducing.<sup>1</sup>

I think, said I, Sir, we have now exhausted all such amusements as go under the name of *exercise*; and I cannot but

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<sup>1</sup> The Dean did not, perhaps, know that there are few tennis-courts which are not places of public resort. Every amusement, so circumstanced, he would certainly have interdicted.

acknowledge you have been more liberal on this subject than I expected. If you will be as indulgent to us in our *domestic amusements* we shall have no reason to complain. What gratification, Sir, on this head, are you disposed to allow us?

All that is necessary, replied the Dean. For my own part, I know not what mental amusement men of science and information want, after a studious day, except that of conversing with each other. Nothing gives the mind a more pleasing relaxation. You need not talk much, if you are indisposed ; and listening to good sense is no fatigue.—Nor does anything excite genius so much as this collision among learned men. We are equally pleased with feeling our own sentiments

corrected, (as it is done in a manner by ourselves) and with correcting the sentiments of others. These meetings among learned men, may be called the *Fair of learning*. They purchase commodities of each other. One man exchanges his wit for another's knowledge ; and each probably gains what he wants, at the expense of something in which he abounds. From this kind of communication too we get a variety of hints which we may afterwards turn to use, and that without the fatigue of thinking, as other people think for us. I knew an ingenious man who read little himself, but kept much good company, and had the art of picking up, and turning to account, every thing he heard. By expanding these hints, and throwing beautiful lights and images

upon them, by the help of a good imagination, he would write a sermon or an essay, which might be called entirely his own; though his friends, who lived much in the same company with him, could now and then discover how he came by his leading ideas.—I should not, however, advise any young man to seek his knowledge in this vague way. It is a hundred to one he is not qualified for it. Besides, it is an indolent way, when you rest solely upon it. In his books he will always meet with instruction.

If the pleasure, said I, Sir, arising from the company of learned men, could be enjoyed in its full purity, it would indeed be a relaxation beyond all others. Where tempers are well harmonized, I can con-

ceive nothing more delightful. But as in chemical mixtures one single heterogeneous ingredient often puts the whole mass into a ferment; so in these learned societies, one man, who talks incessantly, or disputes eagerly, destroys all the pleasure of the meeting, and makes us think we might have employed our time more happily with our own solitary meditations. For myself, indeed, I have seldom mixed freely with any one set of people, among whom some or other has not been of this troublesome description. At college I remember several such intruders on the social pleasures of an evening.

It is very true, answered the Dean, noisy talking and eager disputing are two great evils in conversation; and are often found,

more or less, in the meetings even of learned and ingenious men. And it is a miserable thing when a man's self is the only person pleased with hearing his own conversation. Nay, I will go farther, and allow that this is not the only evil which infests these societies. There are other things which often render them disagreeable. A friend of mine told me lately, that in a capital town in England he was a member of a very reputable society, consisting of several men of taste and science. He was delighted with their conversation, and thought his time very profitably spent. He soon, however, found that one or two of the members of this society had a deistical turn. This might have been endured, if they would have kept their sentiments to themselves, and discussed only

points of literature : but they were forward, on all occasions, to move questions on religious subjects, and would discuss them with very offensive licence. My friend, therefore, seeing no remedy, left his company, and consorted no more with a society where he could not receive pleasure without a great mixture of pain. And indeed I must allow with you, there are so many things which make these general meetings of literati disagreeable, that I know not whether, as far as mere relaxation is concerned, one has not a better chance for it in the mixed company of well-bred people of both sexes. I should at least wish for no more than three or four, in a society of select friends, to make it agreeable.

But, said I, Sir, there are many of us

poor curates, who have few opportunities of getting into company of any kind ; who live in lonely places ; and see few, besides the peasants of our own parishes : What resources have you for us ?

Why, in the first place, answered the Dean, the peasants of your parish are, in many respects, the properest company you can keep. You will not mingle with their pleasures and diversions. But the good pastor will often find leisure to enter their houses and cottages, and see and hear what they are about : and in this duty he will find his amusement. On this head, however, I need not instruct *you*.— Besides, added he, we are rather going from the question. We are not considering amusement as united *with* duty ; but as a relaxation *from* it.—Are you musical ?

I know no amusement so adapted to the clerical life, as music. And indeed not only as an amusement, but as a mean often, as Saul used it, to drive away the evil spirit. Sedentary men are subject to nervous complaints ; and I have known many a man who could at any time fiddle away a fit of the spleen.

I am myself, said I, musical enough to have sometimes felt the relief you mention, though I can, on no instrument, charm any ears but my own.

And what other ears, replied the Dean, do you wish to charm ? To tell you the truth, I should think excellence rather a disadvantage. I have known several clergymen, who were masters of music,

get into disagreeable connections by being called on frequently to assist in concerts with people whom it would have been more prudent to avoid.—We are willing indeed to suppose, that music makes a part of our heavenly enjoyments : but on earth, I am persuaded, it is sometimes found among very unharmonized souls. It may drive away a fit of the spleen, or moderate some momentary passion; but I fear it has not often much effect in meliorating the heart by subduing inordinate affections.— If, therefore, continued the Dean, you can fiddle so as to amuse yourself, I should desire no more.

I hope, then, said I, Sir, my acquirements in this art will not displease you ; for they are very far from the point of ex-

cellence.—But I am chiefly solicitous to have your opinion on a still more favourite amusement, which is *drawing*. It has given agreeable employment to many a solitary hour in my life, and I should be sorry to be debarred the exercise of it.

I have no intention, said the Dean, to debar you from it. But I must give you one piece of advice. As you are fond both of music and drawing, I should not wish you to practise both. One of these *domestic amusements*, I should think, might find sufficient employment for your leisure.—This piece of advice is from myself. But I am not unqualified to give you other instruction. I have no knowledge of the art myself, but I remember

hearing, an excellent judge give instruction to a young man, who had a profession, as you have, and wished to follow drawing only as an amusement. In the first place, I remember, he advised his young friend against colouring, which all dabblers are fond of. To understand the harmony of colours, he said, required great experience ; and without it, colouring was daubing. He advised him also, I recollect, against attempting history, or portrait, or animal life, or any other branch in which *accurate delineation* was required. Landscape he recommended as the easiest and most pleasing branch, which might have the farther advantage of decoying him into the forest, or the field, to examine or copy nature.

I gave the Dean my best thanks for his advice. Of the utility of that part which came from himself, I was already convinced by experience ; and had determined to drop one of my amusements, as I found I could not, without too great an expence of time, follow both. With regard to the other part of his advice, I lamented that it had never been given me before. I owned I was a dabbler, and had daubed over many a sheet of paper. But if I continue, said I, to practise drawing, I shall entirely lay aside my colours, and practise my art, such as it is, in a way that may give me more satisfaction : though perhaps, Sir, I shall please you better by not aiming at any excellence at all.

If you allude, replied the Dean, to what I said about music, you mistake my meaning. My great objection to your obtaining excellence in music, is, lest it should mislead you into improper company. Its sister art is of a more solitary nature, and is not liable to that inconvenience. Except for this reason, and the fear of too much expense of time, I have no objection to your obtaining excellence in both arts.—But though you should not be able to please yourself with your own proficiency in drawing, yet, if you have a taste for the art, you may be greatly amused with the works of others. A clergyman near me, who is now dead, had a small collection of prints and drawings; and when he was fatigued with study (as he was a very studious man)

could, at any time, amuse himself with a few of his prints.

But all this, said I, Sir, requires taste ; and if a clergyman have no taste for these amusements, I hope you have no objection to indulge him in some amusement which does not require it—in a game at chess, for instance, with a neighbouring vicar ; or at back-gammon with the squire ?

In my opinion, said the Dean, chess is so far from being a relaxation, as all amusements should be, that, if you are fairly matched, it is a severe study.. It is a game in which a great variety of different movements create double the variety of different circumstances ; on each of

which circumstances, so numerous a train of consequences again depend, that to provide for all the contingencies that arise from your own moves, and may arise from the probable moves of your antagonist, requires a mind intensely occupied in the pursuit before it, and vacant from every other. In short, a skill in this game, like mathematical knowledge, may be continually advancing to perfection. When I was Fellow of St. John's, I played much at chess; and being fond of it, I attained, as I thought, some degree of excellence: till at length, from beating all the young men at Cambridge who played with me, I began to think myself the best chess-player in England. It happened, on a visit to a friend in London, that an old German officer made one of the party. After

dinner we went to different amusements, and it was proposed that he and I should play a game at chess; as we were both known to be chess-players. I modestly, threw my glove; but my heart beat with a full assurance of triumph. I soon, however, perceived that my antagonist opened his game in a manner to which I had not been accustomed. This roused all my attention. But while I was defending myself in one quarter (for I quickly found I had to act only on the defensive), I received a severe blow on another, which threw me into great confusion; and while I was endeavouring to recover my disordered affairs, the enemy broke in upon me, and shamefully defeated me, without giving me an opportunity of displaying one instance of my prowess.

I was convinced, however, that all this mischief had befallen me from too great confidence, and an incautious manner of opening my game. I begged therefore another trial: but it ended in the same disgrace. My antagonist, by this time, was fully apprized what a hero he had to deal with; and exulting in his success, desired me to fix upon any chamber on the board I pleased, and use all my strength merely to defend that single post: he engaged to attack no other. But in spite of all my endeavours, he gave me check-mate upon that very spot. Nay, he did it repeatedly; for my shame was now turned into admiration. I sat down therefore contented, and endeavoured to console myself by forming the disgrace I had suffered into a lesson against presumption.

I cannot, in return, said I, Sir, tell you a story of my prowess at chess ; but, if you will give me leave, I will tell you one of my perseverance. I played a game with a gentleman at my own lodgings, and was victorious. You have taken me, said he, rather inopportunely to-day ; but if you will be vacant on Thursday, I shall be this way, and will demand satisfaction. Accordingly on Thursday he came about eleven o'clock ; and by the time we had played three games, two of which I had won, his horses came to the door. I cannot leave the matter thus, said he ; if you can set any little matter before me, we will go on. Two games more were played, when in the midst of the third, a bit of roasted mutton appeared ; and by the time it was cold, I had defeated him

again. I was now four or five games before him. Our intercourse therefore with the mutton was short, and we went to work again. I was still victorious, when the horses returned at six. This is provoking, said he ; I cannot leave the matter thus. Can I have a bed at the inn ? His orders to his servant now were, not to bring the horses till they were sent for. This was a melancholy note to me, fatigued as I was already beyond measure. However, as I was under some obligations to the gentleman, and in my own lodgings, I had no choice. The night ended late, and the morning began early. Breakfast came—the barber came—dinner came—all was negligently treated, except the main point. I sighed inwardly, and hoped this visitation,

would now soon have an end. It lasted, however, all that day ; and I was still two games before my antagonist ; though I had played as carelessly as I could, without discovering my indifference. As the evening drew on, I expected every moment to hear a message sent for the horses : I was shocked with his telling me, we could not part on these unequal terms. As the next day was Saturday, and he must of necessity, he said, then finish, he would try his fortune once more. So we continued nailed to our board till a late hour on Friday night, and began again before breakfast on Saturday morning. Towards the close of the day, our accounts differed in one game.. But I was too complaisant to dispute the matter ; so the horses were

sent for, and I was delivered from such a trial of my patience as I never before experienced.

Scarce any mischief happens to us, said the Dean, but we have the comfort of thinking it might have been worse ; and you were happy that your friend did not come to you on Monday instead of Thursday.—As it appears, however, from *my* story, how much time and pains are necessary to obtain excellence in this game ; and from *your* story, how fascinating a game it is—it is worth while to consider, how far it may be a proper amusement for a clergyman—and whether it really answers the end of an amusement by unbending the mind. If it only substitute one severe study for another,

it cannot certainly take the name of an amusement.' Let every one however judge for himself. I found it too interesting to be amusing to me, and therefore in early life I left it off.—It is certainly, however, a noble game. It gives us an idea of war, without its guilt. It gives us a just idea too of common life—of the happy effects of prudent and cautious steps, on one hand;

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\* Cowper, with his usual descriptive talents, admirably portrays the ardour of a chess-player.

Who then  
Would waste attention at the chequer'd board,  
His host of wooden warriors to and fro  
Marching, and counter-marching, with an eye  
As fixed as marble, with a forehead ridg'd  
And furrowed into storms, and with a hand  
Trembling, as if eternity were hung  
In balance on his conduct of a pin?

and of the fatal mischief which often attends even one false step, on the other.

I know not, said I, Sir, whether such games as are made up of *skill* and *chance* together, are not closer imitations of life. Our most prudent plans are often defeated by events which do not depend on ourselves, but arise from what we call *chance*; while an ill-digested plan sometimes succeeds without any aid from our own prudence. Games, therefore, consisting partly of *skill*, and partly of *chance*, seem more to resemble the course of events in human life, than games of mere *skill*, like *chess*.

Certainly, replied the Dean, such games afford a juster picture of the *circumstances*.

of life; but I am speaking of the *conduct* of it. Sometimes, it is true, we are ruined by unavoidable calamity; but more often by our own misconduct: and it is this latter view of life which chess so justly resembles.

Well, said I, Sir, as you repudiate chess from the list of your clerical amusements, because of its *intricacy*, I hope you will take back-gammon into favour, because of its *simplicity*.

Not into my favour, truly, answered the Dean. I know too little of it to make it a favourite. I have no objection, however, to it but its stupidity. Let those play at it, who like it. It seems to me a noisy, rattling game, fit rather to

conclude an evening after a fox-chase, than suited to the taste of men of letters and refinement.—But indeed I have a sort of prejudice against back-gammon, as it contributed to ruin the fortunes of an excellent young man, with whom, in early life, I was intimate at college. He was related to a rich old admiral, and was supposed to be his intended heir; which he probably might have been, had not this stupid game intervened. Back-gammon was the admiral's delight. He had no resources in himself. As to books, he hardly knew the top of a page from the bottom. Back-gammon was level to his genius. All his powers were centered in this game. Three or four hours after dinner, and half that time after supper, he never failed to play; and

all day long, if the weather did not permit him to go abroad. As the admiral was not a very pleasing man, and besides rather penurious in his house-keeping, his company was not much sought after ; and it fell to the unhappy lot of my friend to be his almost constant antagonist. Day after day—it was weary work. I remember well his coming to me one evening, much out of humour : “ I have been playing with him, said he, at this stupid game, from four this afternoon till eight ; and he had the conscience, towards the close of this heavy business, to look me full in the face, and cry, Cousin, you play as if you were tired.”—In short, my friend could not bear this miserable trespass upon his time, and began to make conditions. The admiral was not used

to controul, took the huff, blotted him out of his will, and chose a puppy for his heir, who was fit for nothing but to play at back-gammon.

A liberal-minded man, said I, Sir, is much to be pitied, when his interest and his sentiment are thus at variance. Young as I am in life, I have seen several instances of it ; but I have seldom known, as on this occasion, sentiment prevail.— Upon the whole, however, Sir, I think you are too harsh in your censure of back-gammon. It is not surely a game of deep contrivance ; yet I think it possesses variety enough to be amusing even to an enlightened mind, which wishes, during a short interval, to suspend its faculties, and enjoy the refreshment of a little

privation of sentiment. What has hurt this poor, harmless game, I believe, more than any thing else, is its connection with those wicked little cubes called *dice*, which are employed in so many villainous purposes, that every communication with them is suspected. One of our good bishops, I have heard, is fond of a game at back-gammon, when he can get snug to it with his chaplain. But he stands much in awe of his own servants, lest, in passing to and fro, they should hear their master rattling *dice*. So he plays always on a table lined with green baize, and throws his dice from lined boxes.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This story is told of Bishop Gibson, of London; but as he lived after Dr. Stillingfleet's time, I suppose the same device has been practised by other bishops.

If it had been my case, said the Dean, I should have played openly :—these concealments never are concealed. They only show that we have not resolution to forbear doing, what, on some account, we do not think perfectly right. For myself, I see no reason why the bishop may not indulge himself in a game at back-gammon, without scruple, if he like it. As for the ill-repute it lies under, on the account of its connection with *dice*, I see no more reason for it, than that knives and forks should be objected to because they may become the instruments of gluttony. It is another connection which occasions the mischief. If these *little wicked cubes*, as you call them, were not connected with certain little *wicked circles* called *money*, they would be perfectly harmless. These little *circles* are, in fact,

the wicked companions, which debauch the *cubes*; and are indeed such mischievous companions as seldom fail to turn all amusements into vice. In my Utopia therefore money shall in no degree be connected with amusement. Its proper place is the market, and there only it has concern.

Gaming, said I, Sir, no doubt, is a very strange perversion of amusement: but is there any objection to a trifling stake, which is never felt, whether we win or lose, and is in fact no *object*?

What end then, said the Dean, does it answer?

Merely, I replied, to keep the attention a little awake.

But you must allow then, answered the Dean, that as far as it does keep the *attention awake*, so far it is an *object*. The amusement itself, it seems, cannot keep the *attention awake*; but wants a stimulative, the love of money, which makes you play with that care, and caution, which the amusement itself could not do. And is this any thing else, my good friend, (twist and analyse it as you please) but the spirit of avarice? One man's *attention* cannot be *kept awake*, as you phrase it, without playing for a shilling. Another man must keep his *attention awake* with a pound. A third must be enlivened by a stake of ten times as much; and so on, till the attention of some people must be *kept awake* by staking a patrimony. You see then plainly, that if the stake be

so trifling, as to be no *object*, it can be no *incentive*; and if it be an object, it can only be so by your attachment to a sum of money; and what will you call that attachment, unless you resolve it, with me, into the spirit of avarice?

But though in theory, said I, Sir, you may be able to lead it up to this source, it seems, in fact, to be so trifling, as not to come within any moral calculation.

I know the mathematician, replied the Dean, divides matter with such nicety, as to bring it to an invisible point. But I do not like to see morals so treated. Is the *excess* wrong? If it be, the *approach* cannot be right. If the mind be *at all*

infected with the spirit of *avarice*, and the desire of profiting by your neighbour's loss, it is so far an *approach*. There are different degrees of vice, no doubt; but we are cautioned against breaking one of the *least commandments*, as well as the greatest. The good Christian endeavours to preserve his mind from the smallest taint; and the Christian minister thinks himself particularly bound to abstain from every *appearance of evil*.—In fine, I will not cavil with you, whether playing for money arises from avarice; but certainly the *amusement* ceases, when it cannot itself produce its end; and *what does produce the end*, becomes the leading principle. So that the point issues here: if you choose such feeble amusements; as

are really no amusements without the aid of vicious stimulatives, it becomes you to lay them aside, and seek for such amusements as are simply such.

To be candid, I replied, I have nothing farther, Sir, to oppose. Vicious custom, I fear, hath modified all our amusements, as well as every thing else, and hath driven them from their natural simplicity ; connecting things with them that have no relation to them. I cannot but allow, with you, that amusements should be simply such ; and that if they connect themselves with money, they should assume another name.—I then put the Dean in mind, that he had yet furnished us with no *domestic amusement* that came under the name of *exercise*. Rainy weather,

I observed, might continue so long, as to make a little motion necessary to a sedentary man. Do you object to billiards?

Why no, said the Dean, not much. My own method, when I could not take exercise abroad, was to throw two or three doors open, and walk from one chamber to another, with a book, or scrap of paper in my hand, as I used to do in the fields. But I do not prescribe my own example to others. As to billiards, they are so unhappily connected with gaming and bad company, that I have no great respect for the amusement—at least as a clerical one. However, as the influence of this game, from its expensive apparatus, cannot be so extended as cards, I should not object to a clergyman's playing at it in a

private family, and under the usual restriction of playing with only good company, and for no stake.

I am obliged to you, said I, Sir, for the liberty you have given me of indulging in an amusement, which is a favourite one with me, and in which I am supposed to have some skill.

Nay then, replied the Dean, I know not whether I shall not revoke the liberty I have given you. I am not fond of a clergyman's *possessing skill* in any game. Skill always implies a consumption of time, and an eagerness after an amusement, which I cannot approve.

But you have now, said I, Sir, given

me so much good instruction, that, whatever I may have done, I hope never again either to employ my time in improving my skill, or to use my skill in mis-spending my time.—I then asked the Dean, if he had ever heard of the game of shuttlecock? or if he would laugh at me for mentioning it to him as good *domestic exercise*?

Laugh at you! said the Dean; I know no game that I value more. It has all the characters of the amusement we want. It gives us good exercise—it makes us cheerful—and has no connection with our pockets: and if I may whisper another truth in your ear, it does not require *much skill* to learn. When my legs were in better order, I have

spent many a rainy half-hour with Sir Roger, at shuttlecock, in his hall. The worst of it is, few parsonage houses have a room large enough for it; though perhaps the tithe-barn, if it be not better employed, may furnish one.—I could say more in favour of shuttlecock. You may play at it alone. It is also an exercise too violent to last long. We need not fear, as at billiards, to mispend a morning at it.—Laugh at you! so far from it, that I respect the man who invented shuttlecock.

I asked the Dean next, if he had any objection to some little handicraft business, as *domestic exercise* for a clergyman? And I particularised that of a carpenter, or a turner; both which, I

said, were very well fitted to put the blood in motion.

Aye, aye, replied the Dean, I like them both. I have known very worthy clergymen good carpenters and turners. I knew one who had a shop in his house, and made his own tables and chairs. They were substantial, and not ill made ; though he did not think them neat enough for his parlour, they did very well for his chambers and study. I knew another clergyman, added the Dean, and an exemplary man he was, who was an excellent turner. He used to work in box, ebony, and ivory ; and made a number of little, pretty conveniences both for himself and his friends. In the coldest weather, I have heard him say, he

could put his whole frame in a glow by working his lathe.—Did not you see in the prints, that Mons. Pascal, who died the other day, had retired, a few years ago, to the learned seminary of Port-Royal, where he, and other eminent men made it a rule to intermix their studies with manual labour?

I told the Dean I had seen it, and that I rather wondered at the choice which Pascal had made of his own employment, which was that of making wooden shoes.

Aye, good man, said the Dean, he made them for the poor peasants in his neighbourhood; and I should be glad to give more than double their value for a pair of them to keep for his sake.

I then mentioned book-binding to the Dean, as a clerical art.

Why, yes, said he, I think it is: but we should have introduced it earlier in our conversation, under the head of *domestic amusement*; it will hardly come under that of *domestic exercise*.—Well, have you any thing more to offer? You see, I am disposed to allow my brethren every mode of amusement and exercise that is consistent with innocence and propriety of manners; and I hope the range which may be taken within these bounds, will be thought fully sufficient. If I have omitted any thing, or if you have any thing farther to propose, let me know.

I recollect nothing, said I, Sir, at present ; and have only left to express my grateful obligations to you for what is past. If any thing farther should occur, I shall take the liberty, on some future occasion, to propose it. In the mean time, I am perfectly satisfied myself with the indulgence you have given me ; and should think any of my brethren unreasonable who should desire more.

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THE END.

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